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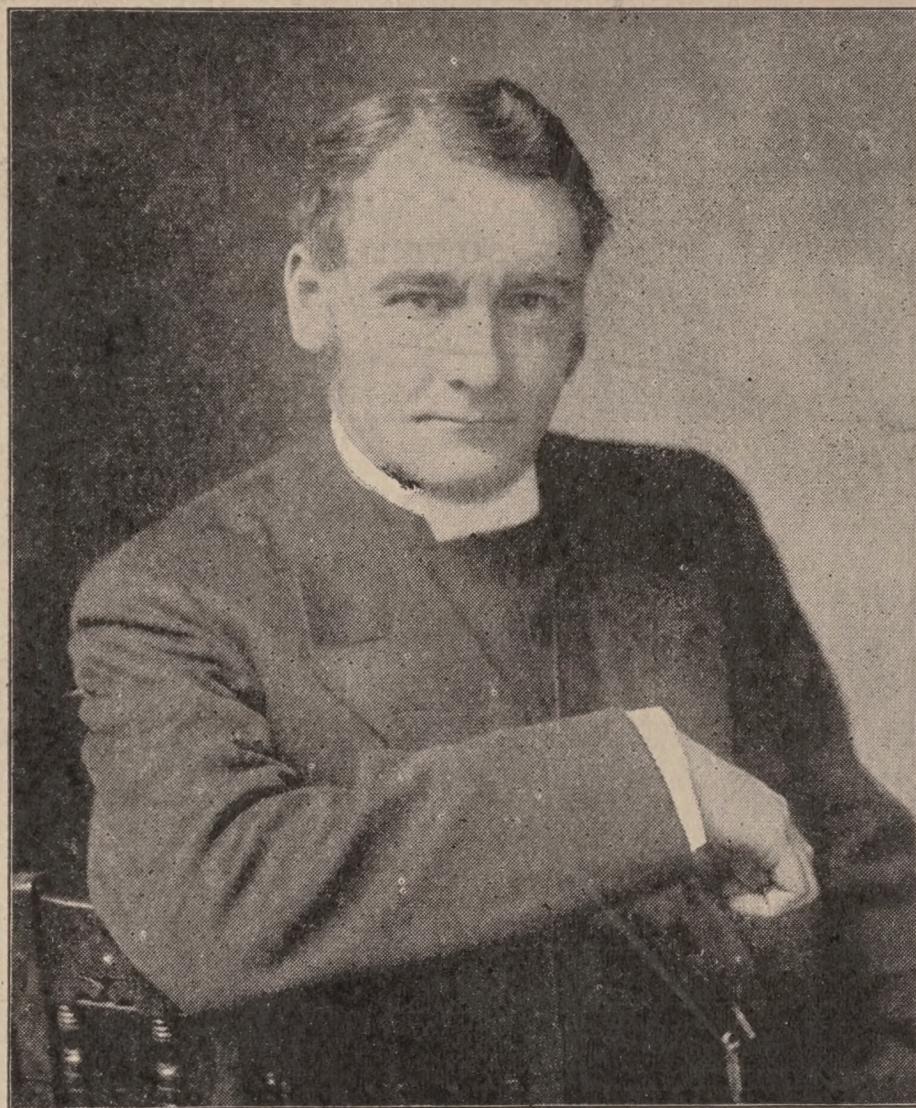




BESIDE THE BONNIE BRIER BUSH

(AUTHORIZED EDITION)

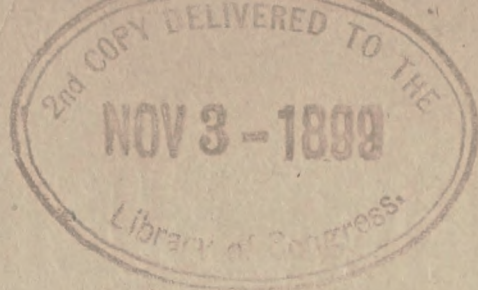
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By Rev. John Watson, M. A., D. D.
(Ian Maclaren)



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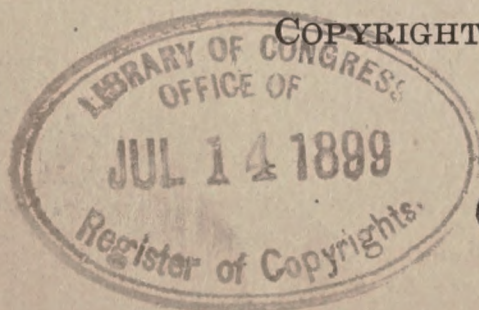
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BESIDE THE BONNIE BRIER BUSH.

(AUTHORIZED EDITION.)

PREFACE.

This edition of Ian Maclaren's famous book has been prepared expressly for those who cannot readily understand the Scotch dialect. There are many in America to whom, on account of the dialect, "The Bonnie Brier Bush" is a sealed volume. In the present edition all difficult words and expressions have been translated, and it is

hoped that the wonderful charm of Maclaren's most noted production may thus, to a certain extent, be unlocked to many who might otherwise pass it by without attempting a reading. This edition is prepared and published with the consent of the author, and by arrangement with his publishers, Messrs. Dodd, Mead & Co.

THE PUBLISHERS.

DOMSIE.

A LAD O' PAIRTS.



THE Revolution reached our parish years ago, and Drumtochty has a School Board, with a chairman and a clerk, besides a treasurer and an officer. Young Hillocks, who had two years in a lawyer's office, is clerk, and summons meetings by post, although he sees every member at the market or the kirk. Minutes are read with much solemnity, and motions to expend ten shillings upon a coal-cellar door passed, on the motion of Hillocks, seconded by Drumsheugh, who are both severely prompted for the occasion, and move uneasily before speaking.

Drumsheugh was at first greatly exalted by his poll, and referred freely on market days to his "plumpers," but as time went on the irony of the situation laid hold upon him.

"Think o' you and me, Hillocks, visitin' the school, and sittin' wi' books in our hands, watchin' the inspector. Keep 's all! it's enough to make the old Dominie turn in his grave. Two ministers came in his time, and Domsie put Geordie Hoo or some ither smart laddie that was makin' for college through his facin's, and maybe some little lassie brought her copy-book. Then they had their dinner, and Domsie, too, wi' the Doctor. Man, I've often thought it was the prospeck o' the School Board and its weary bit rules that finished Domsie. He wasn't, maybe, as sharp at the elements as this precise body we have noo, but everybody knew he was a terrible scholar, and a credit to the parish. Drumtochty was a name in those days wi' the lads he sent to college. It was maybe just as well he slippit awa' when he did, for he would have taken ill with these new-fangled ideas and no college lad to warm his heart."

The present school-house stands in an open place beside the main road to Muirtown,

treeless and comfortless, built of red, staring stone, with a playground for the boys and another for the girls, and a trim, smug-looking teacher's house, all very neat and symmetrical, and well-regulated. The local paper had a paragraph headed "Drumtochty," written by the Muirtown architect, describing the whole premises in technical language, and concluding that "this handsome building of the Scoto-Grecian style was one of the finest works that had ever come from the accomplished architect's hands." It has pitch-pine benches and map-cases, and a thermometer to be kept at not less than 58° and not more than 62°, and ventilators which the Inspector is careful to examine. When I stumbled in last week the teacher was drilling the children in Tonic Sol-fa with a little harmonium, and I left on tiptoe.

It is difficult to live up to this kind of thing, and my thoughts drift to the old school-house and Domsie. Some one with the love of God in his heart had built it long ago, and chose a site for the bairns in the sweet pine-woods at the foot of the cart road to Whinnie Knowe and the upland farms. It stood in a clearing with the tall Scotch firs around three sides, and on the fourth a brake of gorse and bramble bushes, through which there was an opening to the road. The clearing was the playground, and in summer the bairns annexed as much wood as they liked, playing tag among the trees, or sitting down at dinner-time on the soft, dry spines that made an elastic carpet everywhere. Domsie used to say there were two pleasant sights for his old eyes every day. One was to stand in the open at dinner-time and see the flitting forms of the healthy, rosy, sonsie bairns in the wood, and from the door in the afternoon to watch the school disperse, till each group was lost in the kindly shadow, and the merry shouts died away in this quiet place. Then the Dominie (school-master) took a pinch of snuff and locked the door, and went to his

house beside the school. One evening I came on him listening bareheaded to the voices, and he showed so kindly that I shall take him as he stands. A man of middle height, but stooping below it, with sandy hair turning to gray, and bushy eye-brows covering keen, shrewd, gray eyes. You will notice that his linen is coarse but spotless, and that though his clothes are worn almost threadbare, they are well brushed and orderly. But you will be chiefly arrested by the Dominie's coat, for the like of it was not in the parish. It was a black dress coat, and no man knew when it had begun its history; in its origin and its continuance it resembled Melchisedek. Many were the myths that gathered round that coat, but on this all were agreed: that without it we could not have realized the Dominie, and it became to us the sign and trappings of learning. He had taken a high place at the University, and won a good degree, and I've heard the Doctor say that he had a career before him. But something happened in his life, and Domsie buried himself among the woods with the bairns of Drumtochty. No one knew the story, but after he died I found a locket on his breast, with a proud, beautiful face within, and I have fancied it was a tragedy. It may have been in substitution that he gave all his love to the children, and nearly all his money, too, helping lads to college, and affording an inexhaustible store of peppermints for the little ones.

Perhaps one ought to have been ashamed of that school-house, but yet it had its own distinction, for scholars were born there, and now and then to this day some famous man will come and stand in the deserted playground for a space. The door was at one end, and stood open in summer, so that the boys saw the rabbits come out from their holes on the edge of the wood, and birds sometimes flew in unheeded. The fireplace was at the other end, and was fed in winter with the sticks and peats brought by

the scholars. On one side Domsie sat with the half dozen lads he hoped to send to college, to whom he grudged no labor, and on the other gathered the very little ones, who used to warm their bare feet at the fire, while down the sides of the room the other scholars sat at their rough old desks, working sums and copying. Now and then a class came up and did some task, and at times a boy got the tawse (strap) for his negligence, but never a girl. He kept the girls in as their punishment, with a brother to take them home, and both had tea in Domsie's house, with a bit of his best honey, departing much torn between an honest wish to please Domsie and a pardonable longing for another tea.

"Domsie," as we called the school-master behind his back in Drumtochty, because we loved him, was true to the tradition of his kind, and had an unerring scent for "pairts" (unusual abilities) in his laddies. He could detect a scholar in the egg, and prophesied Latinity from a boy that seemed fit only to be a cowherd. It was believed that he had never made a mistake in judgment, and it was not his blame if the embryo scholar did not come to birth. "Five and thirty years have I been minister at Drumtochty," the Doctor used to say at school examinations, "and we have never wanted a student at the University, and while Dominie Jamieson lives we never shall." Whereupon Domsie took snuff, and assigned his share of credit to the Doctor, "who gave the finish in Greek to every lad of them, without money and without price, to make no mention of the higher mathematics." Seven ministers, four school-masters, four doctors, one professor, and three civil-service men had been sent out by the old school in Domsie's time, besides many that "had given themselves to mercantile pursuits."

He had a leaning to classics and the professions, but Domsie was catholic in his recognition of "pairts," and when the son

of Hillocks' foreman made a collection of the insects of Drumtochty, there was a council at the manse. "Bumbee Willie," as he had been pleasantly called by his companions, was rescued from ridicule and encouraged to fulfill his bent. Once a year a long letter came to Mr. Patrick Jamieson,



Domsie.

M. A., Schoolmaster, Drumtochty, N. B., and the address within was the British Museum. When Domsie read this letter to the school, he was always careful to explain that "Dr. Graham is the greatest living authority on beetles," and, generally speaking, if any clever lad did not care for Latin, he had the alternative of beetles.

But it was Latin Domsie hunted for as for fine gold, and when he found the smack

of it in a lad he rejoiced openly. He counted it a day in his life when he knew certainly that he had hit on another scholar, and the whole school saw the identification of George Howe. For a winter Domsie had been "at point," racing George through Cæsar, stalking him behind irregular verbs, baiting traps with tit-bits of Virgil. During these exercises Domsie surveyed George from above his spectacles with a hope that grew every day in assurance, and came to its height over a bit of Latin prose. Domsie tasted it visibly, and read it again in the shadow of the firs at meal-time, slapping his leg twice.

"He'll do! He'll do!" cried Domsie, aloud, lading in the snuff. "George, 'my mannie, tell your father that I'm comin' up to Whinnie Knowe to-night on a bit o' business."

Then the school knew that Geordie Howe was marked for college, and pelted him with fir cones in great gladness of heart.

"Whinnie" was full of curiosity over the Dominie's visit, and vexed Marget sorely, to whom Geordie had told wondrous things in the milk-house. "It can't be coals that he's wantin' from the station, for there's a good many left."

"And it'll not be seed taties," she said, pursuing the principle of exhaustion, "for he has some Perthshire reds himself. I doubt it's somethin' wrong with Geordie." And Whinnie started on a new track.

"He's been playin' truant, maybe. I mind gettin' my punishment for bird-nestin' myself. I'll wager that's the very thing!"

"Well, ye're wrong, William," broke in Marget, Whinnie's wife, a tall, silent woman, with a speaking face; "it's neither the one thing nor the ither, but something I've been prayin' for since Geordie was a wee bairn. Clean yourself, and meet Domsie on the road, for no man deserves more honor in Drumtochty, neither laird nor farmer."

Conversation with us was a leisurely

game, with slow movements and many pauses, and it was our custom to handle all the pawns before we brought the queen into action.

Domsie and Whinnie discussed the weather with much detail before they came in sight of George, but it was clear that Domsie was charged with something weighty, and even Whinnie felt that his own treatment of the turnip crop was wanting in repose.

At last Domsie cleared his throat and looked at Marget, who had been in and out, but ever within hearing.

"George is a fine laddie, Mrs. Howe."

An ordinary Drumtochty mother, although bursting with pride, would have responded, "He's weel enough, if he had grace in his heart," in a tone that implied that it was extremely unlikely, and that her laddie led the reprobates of the parish. As it was, Marget's face lightened, and she waited.

"What do you think of making him?" and the Dominie dropped the words slowly, for this was a moment in Drumtochty.

There was just a single ambition in those humble homes, to have one of its members at college, and if Domsie approved a lad, then his brothers and sisters would give their wages, and the family would live on skim milk and oat cake, to let him have his chance.

Whinnie glanced at his wife and turned to Domsie.

"Marget's set on seein' Geordie a minister, Dominie."

"If he's worthy of it, no otherwise. We haven't the means, though; the farm is highly rented, and there's barely a penny over at the end o' the year."

"But you are willing George should go and see what he can do. If he disappoints ye, then I do not know a lad o' pairts when I see him; and the Doctor is with me."

"Maister Jamieson," said Marget, with great solemnity, "my heart's desire is to see

George a minister, and if the Almighty spared me to hear my only bairn open his mouth in the Evangel, I would have nothing more to ask, . . . but I doubt much it cannot be managed."

Domsie had got all he asked, and he rose in his strength.

"If George Howe doesn't get to college, then he's the first scholar I've lost in Drumtochty. . . . Ye'll manage his keep, and such like?"

"No fear o' that," for Whinnie was warming, "though I haven't a stitch o' new clothes for four years. But what about his fees, and ither odds and ends?"

"There's one man in the parish can pay George's fees without missing a penny, and I'll warrant he'll do it."

"Are ye meanin' Drumsheugh?" said Whinnie, "for ye'll never get a penny piece out o' him. Did ye no hear how the Frees wiled him into their kirk a week ago Sabbath, when Netherton's sister's son from Edinboro' was preaching the missionary sermon, expectin' a note, and if he didn't change a shillin' at the public-house, and put in a penny! Man, he's a lad, Drumsheugh. I'm thinking ye may save your journey, Dominie."

But Marget looked from her into the past, and her eyes had a tender light. "He had the best heart in the parish once."

Domsie found Drumsheugh inclined for company, and assisted at an exhaustive and caustic treatment of local affairs. When the conduct of Piggie Walker, who bought Drumsheugh's potatoes and went into bankruptcy without paying for a single tuber, had been characterized in language that left nothing to be desired, Drumsheugh began to soften and show signs of reciprocity.

"Hoo's your laddies, Dominie?" whom the farmer regarded as a risky turnip crop in a stiff clay that Domsie had to "fight away in." "Are ony o' them shapin' weel?"

Drumsheugh had given himself away, and Domsie laid his first parallel with a glowing

account of George Howe's Latinity, which was well received.

"Weel, I'm glad to hear such accounts o' Marget Hoo's son; there's nothing in Whinnie but what the spoon puts in."

But at the next move, Drumsheugh scented danger, and stood guard. "No, no, Dominie! I see what ye're after fine; ye mind hoo ye got three notes out o' me at Perth market a year ago Martinmas for one o' your college laddies. Five pounds for four years; my word, ye're no very modest about it! And why should I educate Marget Hoo's bairn? If ye knew all, ye wouldn't ask me; it's not reasonable, Dominie. So there's an end of it."

Domsie was only a pedantic old parish school-master, and he knew little beyond his craft, but the spirit of the Humanists awoke within him, and he smote with all his might, bidding good-by to his English as one flings away the scabbard of a sword.

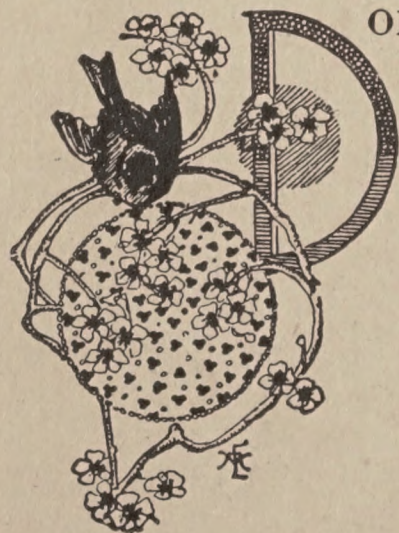
"Ye think that I'm askin' a great thing when I plead for a few notes to give a poor laddie a college education. I tell ye, man, I'm honorin' ye, and givin' ye the fairest chance ye'll ever have of winnin' wealth. If ye store up the money ye have scraped by mony a hard bargain, some heir ye never saw 'ill make it fly in wantonness. If ye had the heart to spend it on a likely lad like Geordie Howe, ye would have two rewards no man could take from ye. One would be the honest gratitude o' a laddie whose desire for knowledge you had satisfied, and the second would be this—anither scholar in the land; and I'm thinkin', with old John Knox, that every scholar is something added to the riches of the commonwealth. And what'll it cost ye? Little more than the price o' a cattle beast. Man, Drumsheugh, ye poverty-stricken cratur, I've nothing in this world but a handful o' books and a ten-pound note for my funeral, and yet, if it wasn't I have all my brother's wee ones to keep, I would pay every penny myself. But I'll no see Geordie sent to the plow, though I go from

door to door. No, no; the grass 'ill not grow on the road between the college and the school-house o' Drumtochty till they lay me in the old kirkyard."

"Man, Domsie was roused!" Drumsheugh explained in the Muir Inn next market. "'Miserly wretch' was the civilest word on his tongue. He would neither sit nor taste, and was half way down the yard before I could quiet him. And I'm no sayin' he had no reason if I'd been meanin' all I said. It would be a scandal to the parish if a likely lad couldna go to college for the want o' money. No, no, neighbors; we have our faults, but we're no so downright mean as that in Drumtochty."

As it was, when Domsie did depart he could only grip Drumsheugh's hand, and say Mæcenās, and was so intoxicated, but not with strong drink, that he explained to Hillocks on the way home that Drumsheugh would be a credit to Drumtochty, and that his Latin style reminded him of Cicero. He added as an afterthought that Whinnie Knowe had promised to pay Drumsheugh's fees for four years at the University of Edinburgh.

HOW WE CARRIED THE NEWS TO WHINNIE KNOWE.



DOMSIE was an artist, and prepared the way for George's University achievement with much cunning. Once every Sabbath in the kirkyard, where he laid down the law beneath an old elm tree, and twice between Sabbaths, at

the post-office and by the wayside, he adjured us not to expect beyond measure, and gave us reasons.

"Ye see, he has a natural talent for learning, and took to Latin like a duck to water. What could be done in Drumtochty was done for him, and he's working night and day, but he'll have a sore fight with the lads from the town schools. No, no, neighbors," said the Dominie, lapsing into dialect, "we darena look for a prize. No the first year, at ony rate."

"Man, Dominie, I'm clean astonished at ye!" Drumsheugh used to break in, who, since he had given to George's support, outran us all in his faith, and had no patience with Domsie's devices. "I tell ye, if Geordie doesn't get a first in every class he's entered for, the judges 'ill be a poor lot!" — with a fine confusion of circumstances.

"Losh, Drumsheugh, be quiet, or ye'll do the laddie an injury," said Domsie, with genuine alarm. "We mustn't mention prizes, and first is fair madness. A certificate of honor noo, that will be aboot it, maybe next to the prize-men."

Coming home from market he might open his heart. "George 'ill be among the first six, or my name is no Jamieson," but generally he prophesied a moderate success. There were times when he affected indifference, and talked cattle. We then regarded him with awe, because this was more than mortal.

It was my luck to carry the bulletin to Domsie, and I learned what he had been enduring. It was good manners in Drumtochty to feign amazement at the sight of a letter, and to insist that it must be intended for some other person. When it was finally forced upon one, you examined the handwriting at various angles and speculated about the writer. When Posty handed Drumsheugh the factor's letter, with the answer to his offer for the farm, he only remarked, "It'll be from the factor," and hurried back to a polled Angus bull he had seen at the show. "Man," said Posty in the kirkyard, with keen relish, "ye'll never flurry Drumsheugh." Ordinary letters were

read in leisurely retirement, and, in case of urgency, answered within the week.

Domsie clutched the letter, and would have torn off the envelope. But he could not; his hand was shaking like an aspen. He could only look, and I read:

"Dear Mr. Jamieson: The class honor lists are just out, and you will be pleased to know that I have got the medal both in the Humanity and the Greek."

There was something about telling his mother, and his gratitude to his school-master, but Domsie heard no more. He tried to speak and could not, for a rain of tears was on his hard old face. Domsie was far more a pagan than a saint, but somehow he seemed to me that day as Simeon, who had at last seen his heart's desire, and was satisfied.

When the school had dispersed with a joyful shout, and disappeared in the pine woods, he said, "Ye'll come, too," and I knew he was going to Whinnie Knowe. He did not speak one word upon the way, but twice he stood and read the letter, which he held fast in his hand. His face was set as he climbed the cart track. I saw it set again as we once came down that road, but it was well that we could not pierce beyond the day.

Whinnie left his plow in the furrow, and came to meet us, taking two drills at a stride, and shouting remarks on the weather yards off.

Domsie only lifted the letter. "From George."

"Ay, ay, and what's he gotten noo?"

Domsie solemnly unfolded the letter, and brought down his spectacles. "Edinburgh, April 7th." Then he looked at Whinnie, and closed his mouth.

"We'll tell it first to his mither."

"Ye're right, Dominie. She weel deserves it. I'm thinkin' she's seen us by this time."

So we fell into a procession, Dominie leading by two yards; and then a strange thing happened. For the first and last time in his

life Domsie whistled, and the tune was "A hundred pipers and a' and a'," and as he whistled he seemed to dilate before our eyes, and he struck down thistles with his stick — a thistle at every stroke.

"Domsie's fair carried away!" whispered Whinnie; "it beats all!"

Marget met us at the end of the house beside the brier bush, where George was to sit on summer afternoons before he died, and a flash passed between Domsie and the lad's mother. She knew that it was well, and fixed her eyes on the letter, but Whinnie, his thumbs in his armholes, watched the wife.

Domsie now essayed to read the news, but between the shaking of his hands and his voice he could not.

"It's no use," he cried, "he's first in the Humanity out of a hundred and seventy lads, first of them all, and he's first in the Greek, too; the like o' this is hardly known, and it has not been seen in Drumtochty since there was a school! That's the word he's sent, and he bade me tell his mother without delay, and I am here as fast as my old feet could carry me."

I glanced around, although I did not myself see very clearly.

Marget was silent for the space of five seconds; she was a good woman, and I knew that better afterwards. She took the Dominie's hand, and said to him, "Under God this was your doin', Maister Jamieson, and for your reward ye'll get neither silver nor gold, but ye hae a mither's gratitude."

Whinnie gave a hoarse chuckle and said to his wife, "It was from you, Marget, he got it all."

When we settled in the parlor, Domsie's tongue was loosed, and he lifted up his voice and sang the victory of Geordie Howe.

"It's ten years ago at the breakin' up of the winter ye brought him doon to me, Mrs. Howe, and ye said at the school-house door, 'Don't be hard on him, Maister Jamieson; he's my only bairn, and a wee thingie quiet.'"

Do ye mind what I said? — ‘There’s something behind that face,’ and my heart warmed to George that hour. Two years after the Doctor examined the school, and he looks at George. ‘That’s a likely lad, Dominie. What think ye?’ And he was only eight years old, and no big for his age. ‘Doctor, I daren’t prophesy till we put him into the Latin, but I’ve my opinions.’ So I had all the time, but I never boasted — no, no; that’s dangerous. Didn’t I say, ‘Ye have a promisin’ laddie, Whinnie,’ one day in the market?”

“It’s a fact,” said Whinnie; “it was the day I bought the white cow.” But Domsie swept on.

“The first year o’ Latin was enough for me. He just snapped up his verbs. Cæsar couldn’t keep him goin’; he was into Virgil afore he was eleven, and the Latin prose, man, as sure as I’m livin’, it tasted of Cicero from the beginnin’.”

Whinnie wagged his head in amazement.

“It was the very night o’ the Latin prose I came up to speak aboot the college, and ye thought Geordie had been playin’ truant.”

Whinnie laughed uproariously, but Domsie heeded not.

“It was awfu’ work the next two years, but the Doctor stood in weel wi’ the Greek. Ye mind hoo Geordie tramped over the moor to the manse through the wet and the snow, and there were always dry stockings for him in this kitchen before he had his Greek in the Doctor’s study.”

“And a warm drink, too,” put in Marget, “and that’s the window I put the light in to guide him home in the dark winter nights; and many a time when the sleet played swish on the glass I was near wishin’ —”

Domsie waved his hand. “But that’s done wi’ noo, and he was worth all the toil and trouble. First in the Humanity and first in the Greek, swept the field — Lord preserve us! I can hardly believe it. Eh, I was afraid o’ those High School lads. They had

terrible advantages. Masters from England, and tutors, and whatnot more, but Drumtochty carried off the crown! It’ll be fine readin’ in the papers —

“‘Humanity. — First Prize (and Medal), George Howe, Drumtochty, Perthshire.

“‘Greek. — First Prize (and Medal), George Howe, Drumtochty, Perthshire.’”

“It’ll be mighty!” cried Whinnie, now fairly on fire.

“And philosophy and mathematics to come! Geordie’s no bad at Euclid. I’ll wager he’ll be first there, too. When he gets his hand in there’s nothing he’s no fit for, with time. My own laddie — and the Doctor’s — we mustn’t forget him — it’s his classics he has, every book of them. The Doctor ’ill be uplifted when he comes back on Saturday. I’m thinkin’ we’ll hear of it on Sabbath. And Drumsheugh, he’ll be neither to hold nor bind in the kirk-yard. As for me, I would not change places with the Duke of Athole!” and Domsie shook the table to its foundation.

Then he awoke as from a dream, and the shame of boasting that shuts the mouths of self-respecting Scots fell upon him.

“But this is fair nonsense. Ye’ll not mind the goin’s on of an old school-master.”

He fell back on a recent roup (auction), and would not again break away, although sorely tempted by certain of Whinnie’s speculations.

When I saw him last, his coat-tails were waving victoriously as he leaped a dyke on his way to tell our Drumtochty Mæcenæ that the judges knew their business.

BESIDE THE BONNIE BRIER BUSH.

THE cart track to Whinnie Knowe was commanded by a gable window, and Whinnie boasted that Marget had never been taken unawares. Tramps, finding every door locked, and no sign of life anywhere,

used to express their mind in the "close," and return by the way they came, while ladies from Muirtown, fearful lest they should put Mrs. Howe out, were met at the garden gate by Marget in her Sabbath dress, and brought in to a set tea as if they had been invited weeks before.

Whinnie gloried most in the discomfiture of the Tory agent, who had vainly hoped to coerce him in the stack-yard without Marget's presence, as her intellectual contempt for the Conservative party knew no bounds.

"She saw him slip off the road before the last stile, and whip around the foot of the garden wall, like a fox after the chickens.

"'It's a hot day, Maister Anderson,' says Marget, from the garden, lookin' down on him as calm as ye like. 'Ye're surely no goin' to pass oor house withoot a glass o' milk?'"

"Would ye believe it, he was that upset he left withoot sayin' 'vote,' and Drumsheugh told me next market that his language afterwards couldn't be printed."

When George came home for the last time, Marget went back and forward all afternoon from his bedroom to the window, and hid herself beneath the laburnum to see his face as the cart stood before the stile. It told her plain what she had feared, and Marget passed through her Gethsemane with the gold blossoms falling on her face. When their eyes met, and before she helped him down, mother and son understood.

"You mind what I told you, o' the Greek mothers, the day I left. Well, I would have liked to have carried my shield, but it was not to be, so I've come home on it." As they went slowly up the garden walk, "I've got my degree, a double first, mathematics and classics."

"Ye've been a good soldier, George, and faithful."

"Unto death, I'm thinkin', mother."

"No," said Marget, "unto life."

Drumtochty was not a heartening place in sickness, and Marget, who did not think

our thoughts, endured much consolation at her neighbors' hands. It is said that in cities visitors congratulate a patient on his good looks, and deluge his family with instances of recovery. This would have seemed to us shallow and unfeeling, besides being a "temptin' o' Providence," which might not have intended to go to extremities, but on a challenge of this kind had no alternative. Sickness was regarded as a distinction tempered with judgment, and favored people found it difficult to be humble. I always thought more of Peter MacIntosh when the mysterious "trouble" that needed the Perth doctor made no difference in his manner, and he passed his snuff-box across the seat before the long prayer as usual, but in this indifference to privileges Peter was exceptional.

You could never meet Kirsty Stewart on equal terms, although she was quite affable to any one who knew his place.

"Aye," she said, on my respectful allusion to her experience, "I've seen more than most. It doesn't become me to boast, but though I say it as shouldn't, I have buried all my own folk."

Kirsty had a "way" in sick visiting, consisting in a certain cadence of the voice and arrangement of the face, which was felt to be soothing and complimentary.

"Ye're about again, I'm glad to see," to me after my accident, "but ye're no done wi' that leg; no, no. Jeems — that was my second son — scrapit his shin once, though no so bad as ye've done, I'm hearin' (for I had denied Kirsty the courtesy of an inspection). It's six years ago noo, and he got up and was travelin' right hearty, like yerself. But he began to sicken in the end o' the year, and glided awa' in the spring. Ay, ay, when trouble comes ye never know how it'll end. I thought I would come up and ask for ye. A body needs comfort if he's ill."

When I found George wrapped in his plaid beside the brier bush, whose roses were no

whiter than his cheeks, Kirsty was already installed as comforter in the parlor, and her drone came through the open window.

"Ay, ay, Marget, so it's come to this. Weel, we daren't complain, ye know. Be thankfu' ye haven't lost your man and five sons, besides two sisters and a brither, no to mention cousins. That would be something to speak aboot, and Losh keep us! there's no sayin' but he might hang on a while. Ay, ay, it's a sore blow, after all that was in the papers. 'Let weel alone,' says I to the Dominie; 'ye'll bring a judgment on the laddie wi' your blowin'!' But ye might as well have spoken to the hills. Domsie's a contrary body at the best, and he was clean infatuated wi' George. Ay, ay, it's an awfu' lesson, Marget, no to make idols o' our bairns, for that's nothin' else than provokin' the Almighty."

It was at this point that Marget gave way and scandalized Drumtochty, which held that obtrusive prosperity was an irresistible provocation to the higher powers, and that a skillful depreciation of our children was a policy of safety.

"Did ye say the Almighty? I'm thinkin' that's too grand a name for your God, Kirsty. What would ye think o' a father that brought home some bonnie thing from the fair for one o' his bairns, and when the poor bairn was pleased wi' it, tore it oot o' his hand, and flung it into the fire? Eh, woman, he would be a miserable, cankered, jealous body. Kirsty, woman, when the Almighty sees a mither bound up in her laddie, I tell ye he is well pleased in his heaven, for mind ye how he loved his own Son. Besides, I'm judgin' that none o' us can love anither withoot lovin' Him, or hurt anither withoot hurtin' Him. Oh, I know weel that George is goin' to leave us; but it's not because the Almighty is jealous o' him or me, not likely. It came to me last night that he needs my laddie for some grand work in the ither world, and that's how George has his books brought oot to the garden, and studies all

the day. He wants to be ready for his kingdom, just as he struggled in the bit school o' Drumtochty for Edinboro'. I hoped he would have been a minister o' Christ's gospel here, but he'll be judge over many cities yonder. I'm not denyin', Kirsty, that it's a trial, but I have light on it, and nothin' but good thoughts o' the Almighty."

Drumtochty understood that Kirsty had dealt faithfully with Marget for pride and presumption, but all we heard was, "Losh keep us all!"

When Marget came out and sat down beside her son, her face was shining. Then she saw the open window.

"I didn't know."

"Never mind, mither; there's no secrets between us, and it made my heart leap to hear ye speak up like yon for God, and to know ye're content. Do ye mind the night I called for ye, mither, and ye gave me the gospel aboot God?"

Marget slipped her hand into George's, and he let his head rest on her shoulder. The likeness flashed upon me in that moment, the earnest, deep-set gray eyes, the clean-cut, firm jaw, and the tender, mobile lips, that blend of apparent austerity and underlying romance that makes the pathos of a Scottish face.

"There had been a Revival man here," George explained to me, "and he was preaching on hell. As it grew dark a candle was lighted, and I can still see his face as in a picture, a hard-visaged man. He looked down at us laddies in the front, and asked us if we knew what hell was like. By this time we were that terrified none of us could speak, but I whispered 'No.'"

"Then he rolled up a piece of paper and held it in the flame, and we saw it burn and glow and shrivel up and fall in black dust.

"Think," said he, and he leaned over the desk, and spoke in a gruesome whisper which made the cold run down our backs, 'that yon paper was your finger, one finger only of your hand, and it burned like that

for ever and ever, and think of your hand and your arm and your whole body all on fire, never to go out.' We shuddered that you might have heard the form creak. 'That is hell, and that is where ony laddie will go who does not repent and believe.'

"It was like Dante's Inferno, and I dared not take my eyes off his face. He blew out

"Ye have not forgotten, mither, the fright that was on me that night?"

"Never," said Marget, "and never can; it's hard work for me to keep from hatin' that man, dead or alive. Geordie gripped me wi' both his wee arms round my neck, and he cries over and over again, 'Is yon God?'"



This time none of them spoke of books.—See page 14.

the candle, and we crept to the door trembling, not able to say one word.

"That night I could not sleep, for I thought I might be in the fire before morning. It was harvest time, and the moon was filling the room with cold, clear light. From my bed I could see the stooks standin' in rows upon the field, and it seemed like the judgment day.

"I was only a wee laddie, and I did what we all do in trouble, I cried for my mither.

"Ay, and ye kissed me, mither, and ye said (it's like yesterday), 'Ye're safe wi' me,' and ye told me that God might punish me to make me better if I was bad, but that he would never torture any poor soul, for that could do no good, and was the devil's work. Ye asked me, 'Am I a good mother to ye?' and when I could do nothing but hold, ye said, 'Be sure God must be a great deal kinder.'

"The truth came to me as with a flicker,

and I cuddled down into my bed, and fell asleep in His love as in my mother's arms.

"Mither," and George lifted up his head, "that was my conversion, and, mither dear, I have longed all through the college studies, for the day when my mouth would be opened wi' this Evangel."

Marget's was an old-fashioned garden, with pinks and daisies and forget-me-nots, with sweet-scented wall-flowers and thyme and moss roses, where Nature had her way, and gracious thoughts could visit one without any jarring note. As George's voice softened to the close, I caught her saying, "His servants shall see His face," and the peace of Paradise fell upon us in the shadow of death.

The night before the end George was carried out to his corner, and Domsie, whose heart was nigh unto breaking, sat with him the afternoon. They used to fight the college battles over again, with their favorite classics beside them, but this time none of them spoke of books. Marget was moving about the garden, and she told me that George looked at Domsie wistfully, as if he had something to say and knew not how to do it.

After a while he took a book from below his pillow, and began, like one thinking over his words:

"Maister Jamieson, ye have been a good friend to me, the best I ever had after my mither and faither. Will ye take this book for a keepsake o' your grateful scholar? It's a Latin 'Imitation,' Dominie, and it's bonnie printin'. Ye mind how ye gave me your ain Virgil, and said he was a kind o' pagan saint. Now, here is my saint, and do ye know, I've often thought Virgil saw His day afar off, and was glad. Will ye read it, Dominie, for my sake, and maybe ye'll come to see —" And George could not find words for more.

But Domsie understood. "My laddie, that I love better than onything on earth, I'll read it till I die; and, George, I'll tell ye what

livin' man does not know. When I was your very age, I had a cruel trial, and my heart was turned from faith. The classics have been my Bible, though I said nothing to any man against Christ. He aye seemed beyond man, and now the vision o' him has come to me in this garden. Laddie, ye have done far more for me than I ever did for you. Will ye make a prayer for your old Dominie afore we part?"

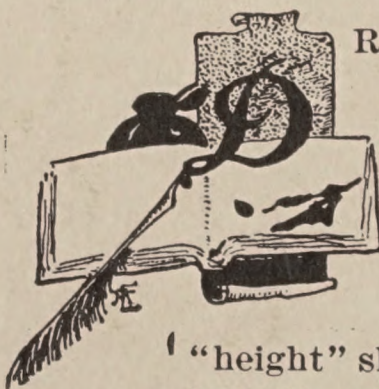
There was a thrush singing in the birches and a sound of bees in the air, when George prayed in a low, soft voice, with a little break in it.

"Lord Jesus, remember my dear maister, for he's been a kind maister to me and many a poor laddie in Drumtochty. Bind up his sore heart, and give him light at eventide, and may the maister and his scholars meet some mornin' where the school never scatters, in the kingdom o' oor Faither."

Twice Domsie said Amen, and it seemed as the voice of another man, and then he kissed George upon the forehead; but what they said Marget did not wish to hear.

When he passed out at the garden gate, the westerling sun was shining golden, and the face of Domsie was like unto that of a little child.

A SCHOLAR'S FUNERAL.



RUMTOCHTY never acquitted itself with credit at a marriage, having no natural aptitude for gayety, and being haunted with anxiety lest any

"height" should end in a "hollow," but the parish had a genius for funerals. It was long mentioned with a just sense of merit that an English undertaker, chancing on a "beerial" with us, had no limits to his admiration. He had been disheartened to despair all his life by the ghastly efforts of chirpy little Southerners

to look solemn on occasion, but his dreams were satisfied at the sight of men like Drumsheugh and Hillocks in their Sabbath blacks. Nature lent an initial advantage in face, but it was an instinct in the blood that brought our manner to perfection. Nothing could be more awful than a group of those austere figures, each man gazing into vacancy without a trace of expression, and refusing to recognize his nearest neighbor by word or look. Drumtochty gave itself to a "beerial" with chastened satisfaction, partly because it lay near to the sorrow of things, and partly because there was nothing of speculation in it. "Ye can have little real pleasure in a marriage," explained our grave-digger, in whom the serious side had been perhaps abnormally developed, "for ye never know hoo it will end; but there's no risk about a 'beerial.'"

It came with a shock upon townsmen that the ceremony began with a "service o' speerits," and that an attempt of the Free Kirk minister to replace this by the reading of Scripture was resisted as an "innovation." Yet every one admitted that the seriousness of Drumtochty pervaded and sanctified this function. A tray of glasses was placed on a table with great solemnity by the "wright" (undertaker), who made no sign and invited none. You might have supposed that the circumstance had escaped the notice of the company, so abstracted and unconscious was their manner, had it not been that two graven images a minute later are standing at the table.

"Ye'll taste, Tammas?" with settled melancholy.

"No, no; I've no incleenation the day; it's an awfu' dispensation this, Jeems. She would be barely sixty."

"Ay, ay, but we must keep up the body so long as we're here, Tammas."

"Weel, puttin' it that way, I'm no sayin' but ye're right," yielding unwillingly to the force of circumstances.

"We're here the day and there the morn,

Tammas. She was a fine wumman — Mistress Stirton — a weel-livin' wumman; this 'ill be a blend (mixture), I'm thinkin'."

"She slippit off sudden in the end; I'm judgin' it's from the Muirtown grocer; but a body cannot discreeminate on a day like this."

Before the glasses are empty all idea of drinking is dissipated, and one has a vague impression that he is at church.

It was George Howe's funeral that broke the custom and closed the "service." When I came into the garden where the neighbors were gathered, the undertaker was removing his tray, and not a glass had been touched. Then I knew that Drumtochty had a sense of the fitness of things, and was stirred to its depths.

"Ye saw the wright carry in his tray," said Drumsheugh, as we went home from the kirk-yard. "Weel, yon's the last sight o't ye 'ill get, or I'm no Drumsheugh. I've no objection myself to a neighbor tastin' at a funeral, all the more if he's come from the upper end o' the parish, and ye know I do not hold wi' the teetotal folk. But there's times and seasons, as the good Book says, and it would have been an awfu' like business to look at a glass in Marget's garden, and poor Domsie standin' in behind the brier bush as if he could never lift his head again. Ye may get sharper folk in the uptak' (comprehension), but ye'll no get a parish with better feelin's. It 'ill be a kind o' satisfaction to Marget when she hears of it. She was aye against tastin', and I'm judgin' her trouble has ended it at beerials."

"Man, it was hard on some o' yon lads the day, but there wasn't one o' them made a mudge. I kept my eye on Posty, but he never looked my way. He's a drouthy body, but he has his feelin's, has Posty."

Before the Doctor began his prayer, Whinnie took me up to the room.

"There's two o' Geordie's college friends wi' Marget; grand scholars, I'm told, and there's anither I cannot weel make out.

He's terrible cast down, and Marget speaks as if she knew him."

It was a low-roofed room, with a box bed and some pieces of humble furniture, fit only for a laboring man. But the choice treasures of Greece and Rome lay on the table, and on a shelf beside the bed college prizes and medals, while everywhere were the roses he loved. His peasant mother stood beside the body of her scholar son, and through the window came the bleating of distant sheep. It was the idyll of Scottish University life.

George's friends were characteristic men, each of his own type, and could only have met in the commonwealth of letters. One was of an ancient Scottish house which had fought for Mary against the Lords of the Congregation, followed Prince Charlie to Culloden, and were High Church and Tory to the last drop of their blood. Ludovic Gordon left Harrow with the reputation of a classic, and had expected to be the first at Edinboro'. It was Gordon, in fact, that Domsie feared in the great war, but he proved second to Marget's son, and being of the breed of Prince Jonathan, which is the same the world over, he came to love our David as his own soul. The other, a dark little man, with a quick, fiery eye, was a Western Celt, who had worried his way from a fishing croft in Barra to be an easy first in Philosophy at Edinboro', and George and Ronald Maclean were as brothers because there is nothing so different as Scottish and Highland blood.

"Maister Gordon," said Marget, "this is George's Homer, and he bade me tell you that he counted your freendship one o' the gifts o' God."

For a brief space Gordon was silent, and, when he spoke, his voice sounded strange in that room.

"Your son was the finest scholar of my time, and a very perfect gentleman. He was also my true friend, and I pray God to console his mother." And Ludovic Gordon

bowed low over Marget's worn hand as if she had been a queen.

Marget lifted Plato, and it seemed to me that day, as if the dignity of our Lady of Sorrows had fallen upon her.

"This is the book George chose for you, Maister Maclean, for he aye said to me ye had been a prophet, and shown him many deep things."

The tears sprang to the Celt's eyes.

"It wass like him to make all other men better than himself," with the soft, sad Highland accent.

The third man waited at the window till the scholars left, and then I saw he was none but one who had been a slave of sin and now was free.

"Andra Chaumers, George wished ye to have his Bible, and he expects ye to keep the tryst."

"God helping me, I will," said Chalmers, hoarsely; and from the garden ascended a voice, "O God, who art a very present help in trouble."

The Doctor's funeral prayer was one of the glories of the parish, compelling even the Free Kirk to reluctant admiration, although they hinted that its excellence was rather of the letter than the spirit, and regarded its indiscriminate charity with suspicion. It opened with a series of extracts from the Psalms, relieved by two excursions into the Minor Prophets, and led up to a sonorous recitation of the problem of immortality from Job, with its triumphant solution in the peroration of the fifteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians. Drumtochty men held their breath till the Doctor reached the crest of the hill (Hillocks disgraced himself once by dropping his staff at the very moment when the Doctor was passing from Job to Paul), and then we relaxed while the Doctor descended to local detail. It was understood that it took twenty years to bring the body of this prayer to perfection, and any change would have been detected and resented.

The Doctor made a good start, and had

already sighted Job, when he was carried out of his course by a sudden current, and began to speak to God about Marget and her son, after a very simple fashion that brought a lump to the throat, till at last, as I imagine, the sight of the laddie working at his Greek in the study of a winter night came up before him, and the remnants of

never again deny that the root of the matter is in the man, although much choked with the tares of worldliness and Arminianism."

"He is a goot man, Lachlan," replied Donald Menzies, another Celt, and he was our St. Francis, for "every one that loveth is born of God."

There was no hearse in Drumtochty, and



"Maister Gordon, this is George's Homer."—See page 16.

the great prayer melted like an iceberg in the Gulf Stream.

"Lord, have pity upon us, for we all loved him, and we were all prood o' him."

After the Doctor said "Amen" with majesty, one used to look at his neighbor, and the other would shut his eyes and shake his head, meaning, "There's no use asking me, for it simply can't be better done by living man." This time no one remembered his neighbor, because every eye was fixed on the Doctor. Drumtochty was identifying its new minister.

"It may be that I hef judged him hardly," said Lachlan Campbell, one of the Free Kirk Highlanders, and our St. Dominic. "I shall

we carried our dead by relays of four, who waded every stream unless more than knee deep, the rest following in straggling, picturesque procession over the moor and across the stepping-stones. Before we started, Marget came out and arranged George's white silken hood upon the coffin with roses in its folds.

She swept us into one brief flush of gratitude, from Domsie to Posty.

"Neighbors, ye were all his friends, and he wanted ye to know how your trust was much help to him in his battle."

There was a stir within us, and it came to birth in Drumsheugh, of all men:

"Marget Hoo, this is no day for many

words, but there's just one heart in Drumtochty, and it's sore."

No one spoke to Domsie as we went down the cart track, with the ripe corn standing on either side, but he beckoned Chalmers to walk with him.

"Ye have heard him speak o' me, then, Maister Jamieson?"

"Ay, oftentimes, and he said once that ye were hard driven, but that ye had trampled Satan under your feet."

"He didn't tell ye all, for if it had not been for George Howe, I would not be worth callin' a man this day. One night when he was workin' hard for his honors examination, and his disease was heavy upon him, poor fellow, he sought me oot where I was, and would not leave till I came wi' him.

"'Go home,' I said, 'Howe; it's death for ye to be oot in this sleet and cold. Why not leave me to lie in the bed I have made?'

"He took me by the arm into a passage. I see the gaslight on his white face, and the shinin' o' his eyes.

"'Because I have a mother . . .'

"Dominie, he pulled me oot o' hell!"

"Me, too, Andra, but no your hell. Ye mind the Roman Triumph, when a general came home wi' his spoils. Laddie, we're the captives that go wi' his chariot up the Capitol."

Donald Menzies was a man of moods, and the Doctor's prayer had loosed his imagination so that he saw visions.

"Look," said he as we stood on a ridge, "I have seen it before in the book of Joshua."

Below the bearers had crossed a burn on foot and were ascending the slope where an open space of deep green was fringed with purple heather.

"The ark hass gone over Jordon, and George will have come into the Land of Promise."

The September sunshine glinted on the white silk George won with his blood, and fell like a benediction on the two figures

that climbed the hard ascent close after the man they loved.

Strangers do not touch our dead in Drumtochty, but the eight of nearest blood lower the body into the grave. The order of precedence is keenly calculated, and the loss of a merited cord can never be forgiven. Marget had arranged everything with Whinnie, and all saw the fitness. His father took the head, and the feet (next in honor) he gave to Domsie.

"Ye must do it. Marget said ye were o' his own blood."

On the right side the cords were handed to the Doctor, Gordon and myself; and on the left to Drumsheugh, Maclean and Chalmers. Domsie lifted the hood for Marget, but the roses he gently placed on George's name. Then with bent, uncovered heads, and in unbroken silence, we buried all that remained of our scholar.

We always waited till the grave was filled and the turf laid down, a trying quarter of an hour.

None gave any sign of what he felt save Drumsheugh, whose sordid mood had slipped off from a tender heart, and Chalmers, who went behind a tombstone and sobbed aloud. Not even Posty asked the reason so much as by a look. But I marked that the Dominie took Chalmers home, and walked all the way with him to Muirtown station next morning. His friends erected a granite cross over George's grave, and it was left to Domsie to choose the inscription. There was a day when it would have been, "Whom the gods love die young." Since then Domsie had seen the kingdom of God, and this is graven where the roses bloomed fresh every summer for twenty years, till Marget was laid with her son:

GEORGE HOWE, M. A.,

DIED SEPTEMBER 22, 1869,

AGED 21.

"They shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it."

It was late November when I went to see George's memorial, and the immortal hope was burning low in my heart; but as I stood before that cross, the sun struggled from behind a bank of cloud, and picked out every letter of the Apocalypse in gold.

A HIGHLAND MYSTIC.

WHAT EYE HATH NOT SEEN.



STRANGE ministers who came to assist at the Free Kirk Sacrament were much impressed with the elders, and never forgot the transfiguration of Donald

Menzies, which used to begin about the middle of the "action" sermon, and was completed at the singing of the last Psalm. Once there was no glory, because the minister, being still young, expounded a new theory of the atonement, of German manufacture, and Donald's face was piteous to behold. It haunted the minister for months, and brought to confusion a promising course of sermons on the contribution of Hegel to Christian thought. Donald never laid the blame of such calamities on the preacher, but accepted them as a just judgment on his blindness of heart.

"We have had the open vision," Donald explained to his friend Lachlan Campbell, who distributed the responsibility in another fashion, "and we would not see — so the veil has fallen."

Donald sat before the pulpit and filled the hearts of nervous probationers with dismay, not because his face was critical, but because it seemed non-conducting, upon which their best passages would break like spray against a rock. It was by nature the dullest you ever saw, with hair descending low upon the forehead, and preposterous whiskers dominating everything that remained, except a heavy mouth, and brown, lack-

lustre eyes. For a while Donald crouched in the corner of the pew, his head sunk on his breast, a very picture of utter hopelessness. But as the Evangel began to play round his heart, he would fix the preacher with rapid, wistful glances, as of one who had awaked but hardly dared believe such things could be true. Suddenly a sigh pervaded six pews, a kind of gentle breath of penitence, faith, love and hope mingled together like the incense of the sanctuary, and Donald lifted up his head. His eyes are now aflame, and those sullen lips are refining into curves of tenderness. From the manse pew I watch keenly, for at any moment a wonderful sight may be seen. A radiant smile will pass from his lips to his eyes and spread over his face, as when the sun shines on a fallow field, and the rough furrows melt into warmth and beauty. Donald's gaze is now fixed on a window above the preacher's head, for on these great days that window is to him as the gate of heaven. All I could see would be a bit of blue, and the fretted sunlight through the swaying branches of an old plane tree. But Donald has seen his Lord hanging upon the Cross for him, and the New Jerusalem descending like a bride adorned for her husband, more plainly than if Perugino's great Crucifixion, with the kneeling saints, and Angelico's Outer Court of Heaven, with the dancing angels, had been hung in our little Free Kirk. When he went down the aisle with the flagon in the Sacrament, he walked as one in a dream, and wist not that his face shone.

There was an interval after the Sacra-

ment, when the stranger was sent to his room with light refreshments, to prepare himself for the evening, and the elders dined with the minister. Before the introduction of the Highlanders conversation had an easy play within recognized limits, and was always opened by Burnbrae, who had come out in '43, and was understood to have read the Confession of Faith.

"Ye gave us a grand discoorse this mornin', sir, both instructive and edifyin'; we were just sayin' comin' up the garden that ye were never heard to more advantage."

The minister was much relieved, because he had not been hopeful during the week, and was still dissatisfied, as he explained at length, with the passage on the Colossian heresy.

When these doubts had been cleared up, Burnbrae did his best by the minister upstairs, who had submitted himself to the severe test of table addresses.

"Yon were very suitable words at the second table; he's a spiritually-minded man, Maister Cosh, and has the right ring aboot him."

Or at the worst, when Burnbrae's courage had failed:

"Maister McKittrick had a fine text afore the table. I aye like to see a man go to the Song o' Solomon on the Sacrament Sabbath. I mind Dr. Guthrie on that very subject twenty years ago."

Having paid its religious dues, conversation was now allowed some freedom, and it was wonderful how many things could be touched on, always from a sacramental standpoint.

"We've been awfu' favored wi' weather, the day, and ought to be thankfu'. If it keeps on like this I wouldn't say but there'll be a good harvest. That's a fine crop of oats ye have in the low park, Burnbrae."

"I've seen worse; they're fillin' no that bad. I was just thinkin' as I came to the

park that there was oats in that field the sacrament after the Disruption."

"Did ye notice that Rachel Skene sat in her seat through the tables? Says I, 'Are ye no goin' forward, Mistress Skene, or have ye lost your token?' 'No, no,' says she, 'my token's safe in my handkerchief; but I couldn't get to kirk yesterday, and I never went forward without my Saturday yet, and I'm no to begin noo.'"

"She was aye a right-thinkin' woman, Rachel, there's no mistake o' that; I wonder hoo her son is gettin' on wi' that fairm he's takin'; I doubt it's rack-rented."

It was an honest, satisfying conversation, and reminded one of the parish of Drumtochty.

When the Highlanders came in, Burnbrae was deposed after one encounter, and the minister was reduced to a state of timid suggestion. There were days when they would not speak one word, and were understood to be lost in meditation; on others they broke in on any conversation that was going from levels beyond the imagination of Drumtochty. Had this happened in the Auld Manse, Drumsheugh would have taken it for granted that Donald was "feeling ill," and recommended the bottle which cured him of a cold in the fifties. But the Free Kirk had been taught that the Highlanders were unapproachable in spiritual attainments, and even Burnbrae took his discipline meekly.

"It was a mercy the moon changed last week, Maister Menzies, or I'm thinkin' it had been a wet sacrament."

Donald came out of a maze where he had been wandering in great peace. "I was not hearing that the moon had anything to do in the matter. Oh, no, but he wass bound hand and foot by a mighty man."

"Who was bound? I'm not just followin' ye, Maister Menzies."

"The Prince of the power of the air. Oh, yes, and he shall not be loosed till the occasion be over. I have had a sign."

After which conversation on the weather languished.

Perhaps the minister fared worse in an attempt to extract a certificate of efficiency from Lachlan Campbell in favor of a rhetorical young preacher.

"A very nice speaker, and well pleased with himself. But I would be thinking when he was giving his images. Oh, yes, I would be thinking. There wass a laddie fishing in the burn before my house, and a very pretty laddie he wass. He had a rod and a string, and he threw his line beautiful. It wass a great peety he had no hook, for it iss a want, and you do not catch many fish without a hook. But I shall be glad that you are pleased, sir, and all the elders."

These were only passing incidents, and left no trace, but the rebuke Donald gave to Burnbrae will be told while an elder lives. One of the last of the old mystical school had described the great mystery of our Faith with such insight and pathos that Donald had stood by the table weeping gently, and found himself afterwards in the manse.

The silence was more than could be borne, and his former responsibility fell on Burnbrae.

"It was wonderful, and I cannot mind hearing the like o' yon at the tables; but I was sorry to see the Doctor so failed. He was bent double; I doubt it's a touch o' rheumatism, or maybe lumbago."

Donald blazed. "Bent down with rheumatism, iss that what you say? Oh, yes, it will be rheumatism. Hass the sight of your eyes left you, and hef you no discernment? Did ye not see that he wass bowed to the very table with the power of the Word? for it wass a fire in his bones, and he wass baptized with the Holy Ghost."

When the elders gathered in the vestry, the minister asked what time the preacher might have for his evening sermon, and Donald again burst forth:

"I am told that in towns the Gospel goes by minutes, like the trains at the stations; but there iss no time-table here, for we shall wait till the sun goes down to hear all things God will be sending by his servant."

Good memories differ about the text that Sacrament evening, and the length of the sermon, but all hold as a treasure forever what happened when the book was closed. The people were hushed into a quiet that might be felt, and the old man, swayed by the spirit of the Prophets, began to repeat the blessings and curses in the Bible between Genesis and Revelation, and after each pair, he cried, with heart-piercing voice, "Choose this day which ye will take!" till Donald could contain himself no longer.

"Here iss the man who hass deserved all the curses, and here iss the man who chooses all the blessings!"

The preacher paused for five seconds, while no man could breathe, and then, lifting up his hand to heaven, he said, with an indescribable authority and tenderness, "The Lord fulfill the desire of your heart both in this world and in that which is to come."

Then the congregation sang, after the ancient custom of our parts:

"Now, blessed be the Lord our God,
The God of Israel,"

and Donald's face was one glory, because he saw in the soft evening light of the upper window the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

It was after this that the Free Kirk minister occupied six months in proving that Moses did not write Deuteronomy, and Lachlan was trying for the same period to have the minister removed from Drumtochty. Donald, deprived by one stroke of both his friends, fell back on me, and told me many things I loved to hear, although they were beyond my comprehension.

"It wass not always so with me, as it iss this day, for I once had no ear for God's voice, and my eyes were holden that I saw not the spiritual world. But sore sickness came upon me, and I wass nigh unto death, and my soul awoke within me and began to cry like a child for its mother. All my days I had lived on Loch Tay, and now I thought of the other country into which I would have to be going, where I had no nest, and my soul would be driven to and fro in the darkness as a bird on the moor of Rannoch.

"Janet sent for the minister, and he was very kind, and he spoke about my sickness and my farm, and I said nothing. For I wass hoping he would tell me what I wass to do for my soul. But he began upon the sheep market at Amulree, and I knew he wass also in the dark. After he left I turned my face to the wall and wept.

"Next morning was the Sabbath, and I said to Janet: 'Wrap me in my plaid, and put me in a cart, and take me to Aberfeldy.' 'And what will ye be doing at Aberfeldy? and you will die on the road.' 'There iss,' said I, 'a man there who knows the way of the soul, and it iss better to die with my face to the light.'

"They set me in a corner of the church where I wass thinking no man could see me, and I cried in my heart without ceasing, 'Lord, send me — send me a word from thy mouth.'

"When the minister came into the pulpit he gave me a strange look, and this wass his text: 'Loose him and let him go.'

"As he preached, I knew I wass Lazarus, with the darkness of the grave around me, and my soul straitly bound. I could do nothing, but I wass longing with all my strength.

"Then the minister stopped, and he said: 'There iss a man in this church, and he will know himself who it iss. When I came in this morning, I saw a shadow on his face, and I knew not whether it was the wing of the Angel of Life or the Angel of Death

passing over him, but the Lord has made it plain to me, and I see the silver feathers of the Angel of the Covenant, and this shall be a sign unto that man, "Loose him and let him go."'

"While he wass still speaking, I felt my soul carried out into the light of God's face, and my grave clothes were taken off one by one as Janet would unwind my plaid, and I stood a living man before Christ.

"It wass a sweet June day as we drove home, and I lay in the sunshine, and every bird that sang, and the burnies by the roadside, and the rustling of the birch leaves in the wind — oh, yes, and the sound of the horse's feet, were saying, 'Loose him and let him go.'

"Loch Tay looked black angry as we came by its side in the morning, and I said to Janet:

"'It iss the Dead Sea, and I shall be as Sodom and Gomorrah;' but in the evening it wass as a sea of glass mingled with fire, and I heard the song of Moses and the Lamb sweeping over the Loch, but this wass still the sweetest word to me, 'Loose him and let him go.'"

AGAINST PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS.



HE powers of darkness had been making a dead set upon Donald all winter, and towards spring he began to lose hope. He came to the cottage once a week with news from the seat of war, and I could distinguish three zones of depression. Within the first he bewailed his absolute indifference to spiritual things, and was content to describe himself as Achan. The sign that he had entered the second was a recurring reference to apostasy, and then you had the melan-

choly satisfaction of meeting the living representative of Simon Peter. When he passed into the last zone of the Purgatorio, Donald was beyond speech, and simply allowed one to gather from allusions to thirty pieces of silver that he was Judas Iscariot. It happened that my diagnosis of Donald's condition was much helped by the analogy of a visitor at the cottage, whose books got at times on his nerves. When flies danced before his eyes he took no new work; when they gave place to rattlesnakes, he curtailed his work; but when a procession of hippopotami arrived on the scene, he knew it was time to cease from work altogether.

"Three hippopotami came end on, this morning," he would cheerfully explain; "so, if you don't mind, we'll take a tramp across the moor."

So long as it was only Achan or Simon Peter that came to sit with me, one was not gravely concerned, but Judas Iscariot meant that Donald had entered the Valley of the Shadow.

He made a spirited rally at the winter Sacrament, and distinguished himself greatly on the evening of the Fast Day. Being asked to pray, Donald continued for five and twenty minutes, and unfolded the words of the devil in such minute and vivid detail that Burnbrae talks about it to this day. It was a mighty wrestle, and it was perhaps natural that Donald should groan heavily at regular intervals, and acquaint the meeting how the conflict went, but the younger people were much shaken, and the edification even of the serious was not without reserve.

While Donald still lingered on the field of battle to gather the spoils and guard against any sudden return of the enemy, the elders had a hurried consultation in the vestry, and Burnbrae put the position with admirable force.

"Nobody can deny that it was a most extraordinary prayer, and it passes me hoo he knows so much aboot the deevil. In fact

it's a preevilege to have such an experienced hand among us, and I wouldn't offend Donald Menzies for onything. But yon groanin' was a wee bit discomposin', and when he said, kind o' confidential, 'He's losing his grup,' my own folk couldn't keep their coontenance. Weel, I was thinkin' that the best plan would be for Maister Campbell just to give a bit advice, and tell Donald that we're thankfu' to hear him at the meetin', and mighty lifted wi' his petee-tions, but it would be an obleegation if he would leave oot the groans and tell us afterwards what was goin' on, maybe in the Session."

Lachlan accepted his commission with quite unusual diffidence, and offered a very free translation on the way home.

"It wass a mercy to have you at the meetin' this night, Donald Menzies, for I saw that Satan had come in great strength, and it iss not every man that can withstand him. But you will not be ignorant of his devices; oh, no, you will be knowing him very well. Satan had not much to say before the prayer wass done, and I will not be expecting to see him again at this occasion. It wass the elders said, 'Donald Menzies hass trampled Satan under foot.' Oh, yes, and very glad men they were, for it iss not given to them. But I would be thinking, iss it good to let the devil hear you groaning in the battle, and I would be wishing that you had kept all your groans, and given them to me on the road."

"Iss it the groans you are not liking?" retorted Donald, stung by this unexpected criticism. "And wat iss wrong with groaning? But I have the Scripture, and I will not be caring what you say, Lachlan Campbell."

"If you have a warrant for groaning, it iss this man that will be glad to hear it, for I am not remembering that passage."

"Maybe you have not read 'Maketh intercession with groanings,' but it iss a very good Scripture, and it iss in my Bible."

"All Scripture iss good, Donald Menzies, but it iss not lawful to divide Scripture, and it will read in my Bible, 'groanings which cannot be uttered,' and I wass saying this would be the best way with your groans."

Donald came in to tell me how his companion in arms had treated him, and was still sore.

"He iss in the bondage of the letter these days, for he will be always talking about Moses with the minister, and I am not hearing that iss good for the soul."

If even Lachlan could not attain to Donald, it was perhaps no discredit that the Drumtochty mind was at times hopelessly perplexed.

"He's a good cratur, and terrible gifted in prayer," Netherton explained to Burnbrae, after a prayer-meeting, when Donald had temporarily abandoned Satan, and given himself to autobiography, "but yon wasn't a very ceevil way to speak aboot his faither and mither."

"I doubt ye're imaginin', Netherton. Donald never mentioned his folk the night, and it's no likely he would in the prayer-meetin'."

"There's no imaginin' aboot it; I heard him with my own ears say twice, 'My father was an Amorite, and my mother a Hittite.' I'll take my oath on it. Noo, I do not know Donald's ancestors myself, for he's from Tayside, but supposin' they were as bad as bad could be, it's no for him to blacken his ain blood, and him an elder."

"Toots, Netherton! ye're off it altogether. Do ye no see yon's Bible langidge oot o' a Prophet, or maybe Kings, and Donald was usin' it in a feegurative capacity."

"Feegurative or no feegurative, Burnbrae, it doesn't matter; it's a pitifu' job diggin' through the Bible for ill words to miscall your folk with afore the public."

Burnbrae gave up the contest in despair, feeling himself that Old Testament allusions were risky, and that Donald's quotation was less than felicitous.

Donald's prayers were not known outside the Free Kirk circle, but his encounters with the evil one were public property, and caused a general shudder. Drumtochty was never sure who might not be listening, and considered that it was safer not to meddle with certain nameless people. But Donald waged an open warfare in every corner of the parish, in the kirk, by the wayside, in his house, on the road to market, and was ready to give any one the benefit of his experiences.

"Donald Menzies is in yonder," said Hillocks, pointing to the smithy, whose fire sent fitful gleams across the dark road, "and he's carryin' on most fearsome. Ye would think, to hear him speak, that old Hornie was goin' loose in the parish; it sent a shiver doon my back. Faith, it's no safe to be much wi' the body, for the deil and Donald seem never separate. Hear him noo, hear him!"

"Oh, yes," said Donald, addressing the smith and two horror-stricken plowmen, "I have seen him, and he hass withstood me on the road. It wass late, and I wass thinking on the shepherd and the sheep, and Satan will come out from the wood below Hillocks' farm-house ('Gude preserve us!' from Hillocks) and say, 'That word is not for you, Donald Menzies.' But I wass strong that night, and I said, 'Neither shall any pluck them out of my hand,' and he will not wait long after that, oh, no, and I did not follow him into the wood."

The smith, released by the conclusion of the tale, blew a mighty blast, and the fire burst into a red blaze, throwing into relief the black figure of the smith and the white faces of the plowmen; glancing from the teeth of harrows and the blades of scythes, and the cruel knives of reaping machines, and from instruments with triple prongs; and lighting up with a hideous glare the black, sooty recesses of the smithy.

"Keep us all!" whispered Hillocks, clutching my arm, "it's little better than

the ill place. I wish to goodness I was safe in my own hoose!"

These were only indecisive skirmishes, for one evening Donald came to my den with despair written on every feature, and I knew that fighting had begun at the center, and that he was worsted.

It was half an hour before he became articulate, during which time he sighed as if the end of all things had come, but at last he told me that he had resigned his eldership, and would absent himself in future from the Free Kirk.

"It hass been a weary winter, when minister and people have gone into captivity, and on Sabbath the word wass taken altogether from the minister's mouth, and he spake a language which we understood not [it was the first of three sermons on the Hexateuch, and had treated of the Jehovistic and Elohistie documents with much learning], and I will be asking all the way back, 'Iss it I?'"

"Oh, yes, and when I opened my Bible this iss the word I will see, 'That thou doest do quickly,' and I knew it wass my sins that had brought great judgments on the people, and turned the minister into a man of stammering lips and another tongue.

"It wass a mercy that the roof did not fall and bury all the people with me; but we will not be tempting the Almighty, for I have gone outside, and now there will be peace and blessing."

When we left the lighted room and stood on the doorstep, Donald pointed to the darkness. "There iss no star, and you will be remembering what John saw when the door

opened and Judas went out. 'It wass night,' — oh, yes, it iss night for me, but it will be light for them."

As weeks went past, and Donald was seen neither at kirk nor market, my heart went out to the lonely man in his soul conflict, and, although there was no help in me, I went to ask how it fared with him. After



"I have seen him and he hass withstood me."—See page 24.

the footpath disentangled itself from the pine woods and crossed the burn by two firs nailed together, it climbed a steep ascent to Donald's house, but I had barely touched the foot when I saw him descending, his head in the air and his face shining. Before any words passed I knew that the battle had been fought and won.

"It wass last night, and I will be coming to tell you. He hass gone like darkness when the sun ariseth, and I am delivered."

There are stories one cannot hear sitting, and so we paced the meadow below, rich in primroses, with a sloping bank of gorse behind us, and the pines before us, and the water breaking over the stones at our feet.

"It iss three weeks since I saw you, and all that time I have been wandering on the hill by day and lying in the barn at night, for it wass not good to be with people, and Satan wass always saying to me, 'Judas went to his own place.' My dog will lay his head on my knee, and be sorry for me, and the dumb animals will be looking at me out of their great eyes, and be moaning.

"The lads are goot singers, and there wass always a sound of Psalms on the farm, oh, yes, and it wass pleasant to come from the market and hear the Psalms at the foot of the hill. It wass like going up to Jerusalem. But there would be no Psalms these days, for the lads could not sing when their father's soul wass going down into the pit.

"Oh, no, and there wass no prayer last night, but I told the lads to go to bed, and I lay down before the fire to wrestle once more before I perished.

"Janet will offer this word and the other, and I will be trying them all, but he wass tearing them away as quick as I could speak, and he always said, 'his own place.'

"'There iss no hope for me!' I cried, 'but it iss a mercy that you and the lads will be safe in the City, and maybe the Lord will let me see you all through the gate.' And that wass lifting me, but then I will hear 'his own place,' 'his own place,' and my

heart began to fail, and I wass nigh to despair.

"Then I heard a voice, oh, yes, as plain as you are hearing me, 'The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' It wass like a gleam from the Mercy-seat, but I would be waiting to see whether Satan had any answer, and my heart wass standing still. But there wass no word from him, not one word. Then I leaped to my feet and cried, 'Get thee behind me, Satan,' and I will look around, and there wass no one to be seen but Janet in her chair, with the tears on her cheeks, and she wass saying, 'Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

"The lads would not be sleeping very sound when their father wass fighting for his life, oh, no, and I am not saying but maybe they would be praying. It wass not very long before they came down, and Hamish will be looking at my face, and then he will get the books, and this iss the Psalm we sing:

"I love the Lord, because my voice
And prayers he did hear.
I, while I live, will call on him,
Who bowed to me his ear.

* * * * *

God merciful and righteous is,
Yea, gracious is our Lord;
God saves the meek; I was brought low,
He did me help afford."

This was the victory of Donald Menzies, and on reaching home I marked that the early roses were beginning to bloom over the door through which Donald had gone out into the darkness.

HIS MOTHER'S SERMON.

HE was an ingenuous lad, with the callow simplicity of a theological college still untouched, and had arrived on the preceding Monday at the Free Kirk manse with four cartloads of furniture and a maiden aunt.

For three days he roamed from room to room in the excitement of householding, and made suggestions which were received with hilarious contempt; then he shut himself up in his study to prepare the great sermon,

and his aunt went about on tiptoe. During meals on Friday he explained casually that his own wish was to preach a simple sermon, and that he would have done so had he been a private individual, but as he had held the MacWhammel scholarship a deliverance was expected by the country. He would be careful and say nothing rash, but it was due to himself to state the present position of theological thought, and he might have to quote once or twice from Ewald.

His aunt was a saint, with that firm grasp of truth, and tender mysticism, whose combination is the charm of Scottish piety, and her face was troubled. While the minister was speaking in his boyish complacency, her thoughts were in a room where they had both stood, five years before, by the death-bed of his mother.

He was broken that day, and his sobs shook the bed, for he was his mother's only son, and fatherless, and his mother, brave and faithful to the last, was bidding him farewell.

"Do not weep like that, John, nor break your heart, for it's the will o' God, and that's aye best.

"Here's my watch and chain," placing them beside her son, who could not touch them, nor would lift his head, "and when ye feel the chain about your neck it will mind ye o' your mither's arms. Ye'll not forget me, John, I know that weel, and I'll never forget ye. I've loved ye here, and I'll love ye yonder. There'll no be an hour when I'll no pray for ye, and I'll know better what to ask than I did here, so do not be comfortless."

Then she felt for his head, and stroked it once more, but he could not look nor speak.

"Ye'll follow Christ, and if he offers ye his cross ye'll not refuse it, for he aye carries the heavy end himself. He's guided your mither all these yéars, and been as good as a husband since your faither's death, and he'll hold me fast to the end. He'll keep ye, too; and, John, I'll be watchin' for ye. Ye 'ill no fail me," and her poor, cold hand

that had tended him all his days, tightened on his head.

"I cannot see ye noo, John, but I know ye're there, and I've just one other wish. If God calls ye to the ministry, ye 'ill no refuse, and the first day ye preach in your own kirk, speak a good word for Jesus Christ; an' John, I'll hear ye that day, though ye'll no see me, and I'll be satisfied."

A minute after she whispered, "Pray for me," and he cried, "My mother, my mother!"

It was a full prayer, and left nothing unasked of Mary's Son.

"John," said his aunt, "your mother is with the Lord;" and he saw death for the first time, but it was beautiful with the peace that passeth all understanding.

Five years had passed, crowded with thought and work, and his aunt wondered whether he remembered that last request, or, indeed, had heard it in his sorrow.

"What are you thinking about, aunt? Are you afraid of my theology?"

"No, John, it's no that, laddie, for I know ye 'ill say what ye believe to be true without fear o' man," and she hesitated.

"Come, out with it, auntie; you're my only mother now, you know," and the minister put his arm round her, "as well as the kindest, bonniest, goodest auntie ever man had."

Below his student self-conceit he was a good lad, and sound of heart.

"Shame on ye, John, to make a fool o' an old doting body. But ye'll no come round me with your flattery. I know ye too weel," and as she caught the likeness in his face, her eyes filled suddenly.

"What's the matter, auntie? Will ye no tell me?"

"Do not be angry with me, John, but I'm concerned about Sabbath, for I've been prayin' ever since ye were called to Drumtochty that it might be a great day, and that I might see ye comin' to your people, laddie, with the beauty o' the Lord upon ye, accordin' to the prophecy: 'How beautiful

upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace," and again she stopped.

"Go on, auntie, go on," he whispered; "say all that's in your mind."

"It's no for me to advise you, who am only a simple old woman, who knows nothin' but her Bible and the Catechism; and it's not that I'm feared for the new views, or aboot your faith, for I aye mind there's many things the Speerit has still to teach us, and I know weel the man that follows Christ will never lose his way in any thicket. But it's the folk, John, I'm anxious aboot; the flock o' sheep the Lord has given ye to feed for him."

She could not see his face, but she felt him gently press her hand, and took courage.

"Ye must mind, laddie, that they're no clever and learned like what ye are, but just plain country folk, each one wi' his own temptation, and all sore bothered wi' many cares o' this world. They 'ill need a clear word to comfort their hearts and show them the way everlastin'. Ye 'ill say what's right, no doubt o' that, and everybody 'ill be pleased wi' ye, but oh, laddie, be sure ye say a good word for Jesus Christ."

The minister's face whitened, and his arm relaxed. He rose hastily and went to the door, but in going out he gave his aunt an understanding look, such as passes between people who have stood together in a sorrow. The son had not forgotten his mother's request.

The manse garden lies toward the west, and as the minister paced its little square of turf, the sun was going down behind the Grampians. Black, massy clouds had begun to gather in the evening, and threatened to obscure the sunset, which was the finest sight a Drumtochty man was ever likely to see, and a means of grace to every sensible heart in the glen. But the sun had beat back the clouds on either side, and shot them through with glory, and now between

piled billows of light he went along a shining pathway into the Gates of the West. The minister stood still before that spectacle, his face bathed in the golden glory, and then before his eyes the gold deepened into an awful red, and the red passed into shades of violet and green, beyond painter's hand or the imagination of man. It seemed to him as if a victorious saint had entered through the gates into the city, and the after-glow of his mother's life fell solemnly on his soul. The last trace of sunset had faded from the hills when the minister came in, and his face was of one who had seen a vision. He asked his aunt to have worship with the servant, for he must be alone in his study.

It was a cheerful room in the daytime, with its southern window, through which the minister saw the roses touching the very glass, and beyond dwarf apple trees lining the garden walks. It was a pleasant room now, when the curtains were drawn and the light of the lamp fell on the books he loved. One by one he had arranged the hard-bought treasures of student days in the little book-case, and had planned for himself that sweetest of pleasures, an evening of desultory reading. But his books went out of mind as he looked at the sermon shining beneath the glare of the lamp, and demanding judgment. He had finished its last page with honest pride that afternoon, and had declaimed it, facing the southern window, with a success that amazed himself. His hope was that he might be kept humble, and not called to Edinburgh for at least two years; and now he lifted the sheets with fear. The brilliant opening, with its historical parallel, this review of modern thought reinforced by telling quotations, that trenchant criticism of old-fashioned views, would not deliver. For the audience had vanished, and left one care-worn but ever beautiful face, whose gentle eyes were waiting with a yearning look. Twice he crushed the sermon in his hands, and turned

to the fire his aunt's care had kindled, and twice he repented and smoothed it out. What else could he say now to the people? and then in the stillness of the room he heard a voice, "Speak a good word for Jesus Christ."

Next minute he was kneeling on the hearth, and pressing the magnum opus that was to shake Drumtochty into the heart of the red fire, and he saw, half-smiling and half-weeping, the impressive words, "Semitic environment," shrivel up and disappear. As the last black flake fluttered out of sight, the face looked at him again, but this time the sweet brown eyes were full of peace.

Very likely it was no masterpiece, but only the crude production of a lad who knew little of letters and nothing of the world. Very likely it would have done neither harm nor good, but it was his best, and he gave it for love's sake, and I suppose that there is nothing in a human life so precious to God, neither clever words nor famous deeds, as the sacrifices of love.

The moon flooded his bedroom with silver light, and he felt the presence of his mother. His bed stood ghostly with its white curtains, and he remembered how every night his mother knelt by its side in prayer for him. He is a boy once more, and repeats the Lord's Prayer, then he cries again, "My mother! my mother!" and an indescribable contentment fills his heart.

His prayer next morning was very short, but afterwards he stood at the window for a space, and, when he turned, his aunt said:

"Ye 'ill get your sermon, and it 'ill be worth hearing."

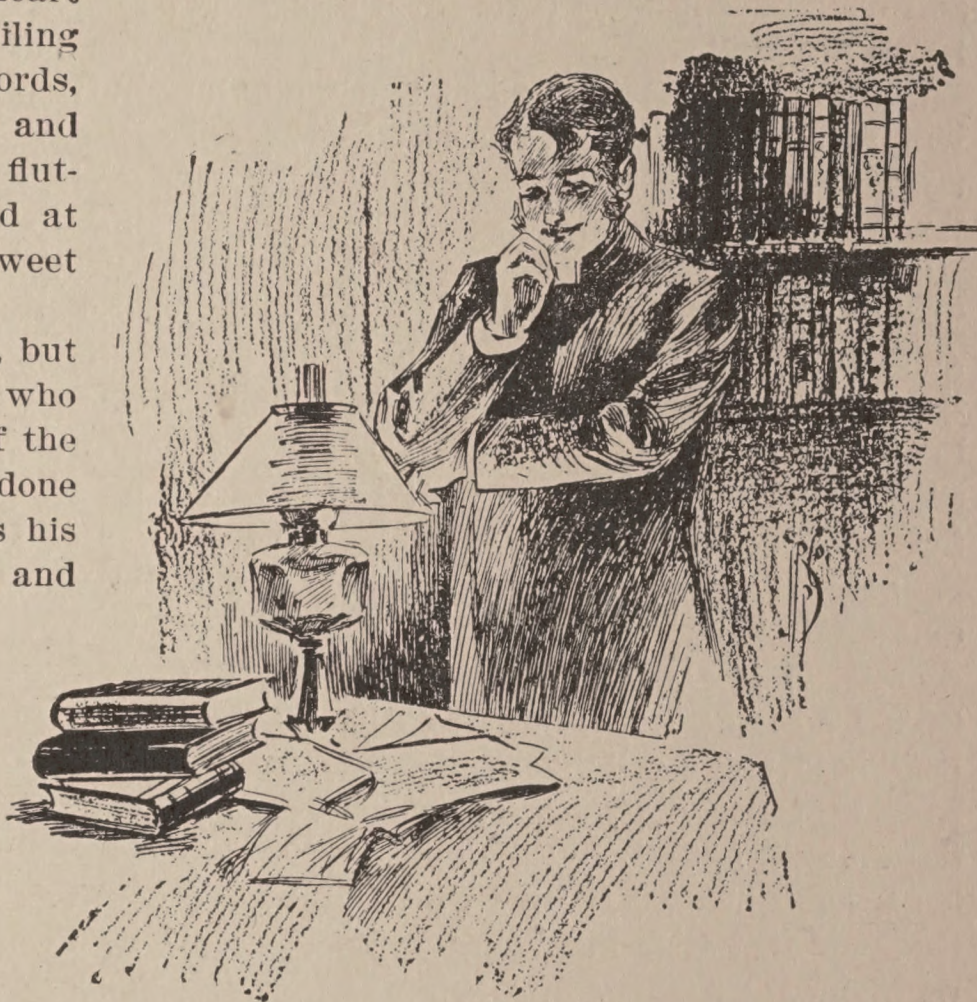
"How did ye know?"

But she only smiled. "I heard you pray."

When he shut himself into the study that Saturday morning he heard her go into her

room above, and he knew she went to intercede for him.

An hour afterwards he was pacing the garden in such anxious thought that he crushed with his foot a rose lying on the path, and then she saw his face suddenly lighten, and he hurried to the house, but first he plucked a bunch of forget-me-nots.



He looked at the sermon.—See page 28.

In the evening she found them on his sermon.

Two hours later — for still she prayed and watched in faithfulness to mother and son — she observed him come out and wander round the garden in great joy. He lifted up the soiled rose and put it in his coat; he released a butterfly caught in some mesh; he buried his face in fragrant honeysuckle. Then she knew that his heart was full of love, and that it would be well on the morrow.

When the bell began to ring, the minister rose from his knees and went to his aunt's

room to be robed, for this was a covenant between them.

His gown was spread out in its black silken glory, but he sat down in despair.

"Auntie, whatever shall we do? for I've forgot the bands."

"But I've not forgot them, John, and here are six pair wrought with my own hands; and now sit still and I'll tie them round my laddie's neck."

When she had given the last touch, and he was ready to go, a sudden seriousness fell upon them.

"Kiss me, auntie."

"For your mother, and her God be with you," and then he went through the garden and underneath the honeysuckle and into the kirk, where every Free Kirker in Drumtochty that could get out of bed, and half the Established Kirk, were waiting in expectation.

I sat with his aunt in the minister's pew, and shall always be glad that I was at that service. When winter lies heavy upon the Glen I go upon my travels, and in my time have seen many religious functions. I have been in Mr. Spurgeon's Tabernacle, where the people wept one minute and laughed the next; have heard Liddon in St. Paul's, and the sound of that high, clear voice is still with me, "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion;" have seen High Mass in St. Peter's, and stood in the dusk of the Duomo at Florence when Padre Agostino thundered against the evils of the day. But I never realized the unseen world as I did that day in the Free Kirk of Drumtochty.

It is impossible to analyze a spiritual effect, because it is largely an atmosphere, but certain circumstances assisted. One was instantly prepossessed in favor of the young minister who gave out the second Paraphrase at his first service, for it declared his filial reverence and won for him the blessing of a cloud of witnesses. No Scottish man can ever sing

"God of our fathers, be the God
Of their succeeding race,"

with a dry heart. It satisfied me at once that the minister was of a fine temper when, after a brave attempt to join, he hid his face and was silent. We thought none the worse of him that he was nervous, and two or three old people who had suspected self-sufficiency, took him to their hearts when the minister concluded the Lord's Prayer hurriedly, having omitted two petitions. But we knew it was not nervousness which made him pause for ten seconds after praying for widows and orphans, and in the silence which fell upon us the Divine Spirit had free access. His youth commended him, since he was also modest, for every mother had come with an inarticulate prayer that the "puir laddie would do weel on his first day, and him only twenty-four." Texts I can never remember, nor, for that matter, the words of sermons; but the subject was Jesus Christ, and before he had spoken five minutes I was convinced that Christ was present. The preacher faded from before one's eyes, and there arose the figure of the Nazarene, best lover of every human soul, stretching out his pierced hands to old folk and little children as he did, before his death, in Galilee. His voice might be heard any moment, as I have imagined it in my lonely hours by the winter fire or on the solitary hills—soft, low and sweet, penetrating like music to the secret of the heart, "Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest."

During a pause in the sermon I glanced up the church, and saw the same spell held the people. Donald Menzies had long ago been caught into the third heaven, and was now hearing words which it is not lawful to utter. Campbell, in his watch-tower at the back, had closed his eyes, and was praying. The women were weeping quietly, and the rugged faces of our men were subdued and softened, as when the evening sun plays on the granite stone.

But what will stand out forever before my mind was the sight of Marget Howe. Her face was as white as death, and her wonderful gray eyes were shining through a mist of tears, so that I caught the light in the manse pew. She was thinking of George, and had taken the minister to her heart.

The elders, one by one, gripped the minister's hand in the vestry, and, though plain, homely men, they were the godliest in the Glen; but no man spake save Burnbrae.

"I lost one fairm for the Free Kirk, and I would have lost ten to be in the kirk this day."

Donald walked with me homewards, but would only say:

"There was a man sent from God whose name was John." At the cottage he added, "The friend of the bridegroom rejoiced greatly because of the bridegroom's voice."

Beneath the honeysuckle at his garden gate a woman was waiting.

"My name is Marget Howe, and I'm the wife of William Howe of Whinnie Knowe. My only son was preparin' for the ministry, but God wanted him nearly a year ago. When ye preached the Evangel o' Jesus the day I heard his voice, and I loved you. Ye have no mither on earth, I hear, and I have no son, and I want to say that if ye ever wish to speak to ony woman as ye would to your mither, come to Whinnie Knowe, and I'll count it one of the Lord's consolations."

His aunt could only meet him in the study, and when he looked on her his lip quivered, for his heart was wrung with one wistful regret.

"Oh, auntie, if she had only been spared to see this day, and her prayers answered!"

But his aunt flung her arms around his neck.

"Do not be cast doon, laddie, nor be unbelievin'. Your mither has heard every word, and is satisfied, for ye did it in remembrance o' her, and yon was your mither's sermon."

THE TRANSFORMATION OF LACHLAN CAMPBELL.

A GRAND INQUISITOR.



THE Free Kirk of Drumtochty had no gallery, but a section of seats at the back was raised two feet, and any one in the first pew might be said to sit in the "front o' the gallery." When Lachlan Campbell arrived from the privileged parish of Auchindarroch, he examined the lie of country with the eye of a strategist, and seized at once a corner seat on the crest of the hill. From this vantage ground, with his back to the wall, and a clear space left between himself and his daughter Flora, he had an easy command of the pulpit, and within six months

had been constituted a court of review neither minister nor people could lightly disregard. It was not that Lachlan spoke hastily or at length, for his policy was generally a silence pregnant with judgment, and his deliverances were for the most part in parables, none the less awful because hard of interpretation. Like every true Celt, he had the power of reserve, and knew the value of mystery. His voice must not be heard in irresponsible gossip at the kirk door, and he never condescended to the level of Mrs. MacFadyen, our recognized sermon taster, who criticised everything in the technique of the pulpit, from the number of heads in a sermon to the air with which a probationer used his pocket-handkerchief. She lived in the eye of the public, and gave her opinions with the light heart of a newspaper

writer; but Lachlan kept himself in the shadow and wore a manner of studied humility as became the administrator of the Holy Office in Drumtochty.

Lachlan was a little man, with a spare, wiry body, iron gray hair, and whiskers carefully arranged, a keen, old-fashioned face, sharpened by much spiritual thinking, and eyes that looked at you from beneath shaggy eyebrows as from some other world. His face had an irresistible suggestion of a Skye terrier, the most serious of animals, with the hair reduced, and Drumsheugh carried us all with him when, in a moment of inspiration, he declared that "the body looks as if he had just come oot o' the Ark." He was a shepherd to trade, and very faithful in all his work, but his life business was theology, from Supralapsarianism in Election to the marks of faith in a believer's heart. His library consisted of some fifty volumes of ancient divinity, and lay on an old oak chest close to his hand, where he sat beside the fire of a winter night. When the sheep were safe, and his day's labor was over, he read by the light of the fire and the "crusie" (oil lamp) overhead, Witrius on the Covenants, or Rutherford's "Christ Dying," or Bunyan's "Grace Abounding," or Owen's "130th Psalm," while the colliers slept at his feet, and Flora put the finishing stroke on some bit of rustic finery. Worship was always colored by the evening's reading, but the old man never forgot to pray that they both might have a place in the everlasting covenant, and that the backslidings of Scotland might be healed.

As our inquisitor, Lachlan searched anxiously for sound doctrine and deep experience, but he was not concerned about learning, and fluency he regarded with disgust. When a young minister from Muirtown stamped twice in his prayer at the Drumtochty Fast, and preached with great eloquence from the words, "And there was no more sea," repeating the text at the end of each paragraph, and concluding the ser-

mon with "Lord Ullin's Daughter," the atmosphere round Lachlan became electric, and no one dared to speak to him outside. He never expressed his mind on this melancholy exhibition, but the following Sabbath he explained the principle on which they elected ministers at Auchindarroch, which was his standard of perfection.

"Six young men came, and they did not sing songs in the pulpit. Oh, no, they preached very well, and I said to Angus Bain, 'They are all goot lads, and there iss nothing wrong with their doctrine.'

"Angus wass one of the 'Men,' and saw what wass hidden from me, and he will be saying, 'Oh, yes, they said their lesson very pretty, but I did not see them tremble, Lachlan Campbell. Another iss coming, and seven iss a goot number.'

"It wass next Sabbath that he came, and he wass a white man, giving out his text, 'Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb,' and I wass thinking that the Lord had laid too great a burden on the lad, and that he could not be fit for such work. It wass not more than ten minutes before he will be trying to tell us what he wass seeing, and will not have the words. He had to go down from the pulpit as a man that had been in the heavenly places and wass stricken dumb.

"'It iss the Lord that has put me to shame this day,' he said to the elders, 'and I will never show my face again in Auchindarroch, for I ought not to have meddled with things too high for me.'

"'You will show your face here every Sabbath,' answered Angus Bain, 'for the Lord said unto me, "Wait for the man that trembles at the Word, and iss not able to speak, and it will be a sign unto you,"' and a very goot minister he wass, and made the hypocrites in Zion to be afraid."

Lachlan dealt tenderly with our young Free Kirk minister, for the sake of his first day, and passed over some very shallow experience without remark, but an autumn

sermon roused him to a sense of duty. For some days a storm of wind and rain had been stripping the leaves from the trees and gathering them in sodden heaps upon the ground. The minister looked out on the garden where many holy thoughts had visited him, and his heart sank like lead, for it was desolate, and of all its beauty there remained but one rose clinging to its stalk, drenched and faded. It seemed as if youth, with its flower of promise and hope, had been beaten down, and a sense of loneliness fell on his soul. He had no heart for work, and crept to bed broken and dispirited. During the night the rain ceased, and the north wind began to blow, which cleanses nature in every pore, and braces each true man for his battle. The morrow was one of those glorious days which herald winter, and as the minister tramped along the road, where the dry leaves crackled beneath his feet, and climbed to the moor with head on high, the despair of yesterday vanished. The wind had ceased, and the Glen lay at his feet, distinct, in the cold, clear air, from the dark mass of pines that closed its upper end to the swelling woods of oak and beech that cut it off from Strathmore. He had received a warm welcome from all kinds of people, and now he marked with human sympathy each little homestead with its belt of firs against the winter's storms, and its stack-yard where the corn had been gathered safe; the plowman and his horses cutting brown ribbons in the bare stubble; dark squares where the potato stalks have withered to the ground, and women are raising the roots, and here and there a few cattle still out in the fields. His eye fell on the

great wood through which he had rambled in August, now one blaze of color, rich green and light yellow, with patches of fiery red and dark purple. God seemed to have given him a sermon, and he wrote that evening, like one inspired, on the same parable of nature Jesus loved, with its subtle interpretation of our sorrows, joys, trust and hope. People told me that it was a "bonnie sermon," and that Netherton had forgotten his



He had an easy command of the pulpit.—See page 31.

after-sermon snuff, although it was his turn to pass the box to Burnbrae.

The minister returned to his study in a fine glow of body and soul, to find a severe figure standing motionless in the middle of the room.

"Wass that what you call a sermon?" said Lachlan Campbell, without other greeting.

John Carmichael was still so full of joy that he did not catch the tone, and explained with college pedantry that it was hardly a sermon, nor yet a lecture.

"You may call it a meditation."

"I will be calling it an essay, without one bite of grass for starving sheep."

Then the minister awoke from a pleasant dream, as if one had flung cold water on his naked body.

"What was wrong?" with an anxious look at the stern little man, who of a sudden had become his judge.

"There wass nothing right, for I am not thinking that trees and leaves and stubble fields will save our souls, and I did not hear about sin and repentance and the work of Christ. It iss sound doctrine that we need, and a great peety you are not giving it."

The minister had been made much of in college circles, and had a fair idea of himself. He was a kindly lad, but he did not see why he should be lectured by an old Highlandman who read nothing except Puritans, and was blind with prejudice. When they parted that Sabbath afternoon it was the younger man that had lost his temper, and the other did not offer to shake hands.

Perhaps the minister would have understood Lachlan better if he had known that the old man could not touch food when he got home, and spent the evening in a fir wood praying for the lad he had begun to love. And Lachlan would have had a lighter heart if he had heard the minister questioning himself whether he had denied the Evangel or sinned against one of Christ's disciples. They argued together; they prayed apart.

Lachlan was careful to say nothing, but the congregation felt that his hand was against the minister, and Burnbrae took him to task.

"Ye mustn't be too hard on him, Maister Campbell, for he's but young, and comin' on fine. He has a hearty word for everybody on the road, and the sight o' his fresh young face in the pulpit is a sermon itself."

"You are wrong, Burnbrae, if you will be thinking that my heart iss not warm to the

minister, for it went out unto him from the day he preached his first sermon. But the Lord regardeth not the countenance of man."

"No doubt, no doubt; but I cannot see anything wrong in his doctrine; it would not be reasonable to expect old-fashioned sermons from a young man, and I would count them barely honest. I'm no denyin' that he goes far afield, and takes us to strange lands when he's on his travels; but ye'll acknowledge that he gathers mony treasures, and he aye comes back to Christ."

"No, I will not be saying that John Carmichael does not love Christ, for I have seen the Lord in his sermons like a face through a lattice. Oh, yes, and I have felt the fragrance of the myrrh. But I am not liking his doctrine, and I wass thinking that some day there will be no original sin left in the parish of Drumtochty."

It was about this time that the minister made a great mistake, although he was trying to do his best for the people. He used to come over to the cottage for a ramble through my books, and one evening he told me that he had prepared what he called a "course" on Biblical criticism, and was going to place Drumtochty on a level with Germany. It was certainly a strange part for me to advise a minister, but I had grown to like the lad because he was full of enthusiasm, and too honest for this world, and I implored him to be cautious. Drumtochty was not anxious to be enlightened about the authors of the Pentateuch, being quite satisfied with Moses, and it was possible that certain good men in Drumtochty might resent any interference with their hereditary notions. Why could he not read this subject for his own pleasure, and teach it quietly in classes? Why give himself away in the pulpit? This worldly counsel brought the minister to a white heat, and he rose to his feet. Had he not been ordained to feed his people with truth, and was he not bound to tell them all he knew?

We were living in an age of transition, and he must prepare Christ's folk that they be not taken unawares. If he failed in his duty through any fear of consequences, men would arise afterwards to condemn him for cowardice, and lay their unbelief at his door. When he ceased I was ashamed of my cynical advice, and resolved never again to interfere with "courses" or other matters above the lay mind. But greater knowledge of the world had made me a wise prophet.

Within a month the Free Kirk was in an uproar, and when I dropped in one Sabbath morning the situation seemed to me a very pathetic tragedy. The minister was offering to the honest country folk a mass of immature and undigested details about the Bible, and they were listening with wearied, perplexed faces. Lachlan Campbell sat grim and watchful, without a sign of flinching, but even from the manse pew I could detect the suffering of his heart. When the minister blazed into polemic against the bigotry of the old school, the iron face quivered as if a father had been struck by his son. Carmichael looked thin and nervous in the pulpit, and it came to me that if new views are to be preached to old-fashioned people it ought not to be by lads who are always heady and intolerant, but by a stout man of middle age, with a rich voice and a good-natured manner. Had Carmichael rasped and girded much longer one would have believed in the inspiration of the vowel points, and I left the church with a low heart, for this was a woeful change from his first sermon.

Lachlan would not be pacified, not even by the plea of the minister's health.

"Oh, yes, I am seeing that he iss ill, and I will be as sorry as any man in Drumtochty. But it iss not too much work, as they are saying; it iss the judgment of God. It iss not goot to meddle with Moses, and John Carmichael will be knowing that. His own sister wass not respectful to Moses,

and she will not be feeling very well next day."

But Burnbrae added that "the old man could not be more cast doon if he had lost his daughter."

The peace of the Free Kirk had been broken, and the minister was eating out his heart, when he remembered the invitation of Marget Howe, and went one sweet spring day to Whinnie Knowe.

Marget met him with her quiet welcome at the garden gate.

"Ye have done me a great kindness in comin', Maister Carmichael, and if ye please we 'ill sit in this sunny corner which is dear to me, and ye 'ill tell me your troubles."

So they sat down together beside the brier bush, and after one glance at Marget's face the minister opened his heart, and told her the great controversy with Lachlan.

Marget lifted her head as one who had heard of some brave deed, and there was a ring in her voice.

"It makes me proud before God that there are two men in Drumtochty who follow their conscience as king, and count truth dearer than their own friends. It is pitifu' when God's bairns fight through greed and envy, but it is heartsome when they are willin' to wrestle aboot the Evangel, for surely the end o't must be peace. I've often thought that in the old days both the man on the rack, and the inquisitor himself, might be good men and accepted o' God, and maybe the inquisitor suffered more than the martyr. I'm thinkin', Maister Carmichael, that it's been hardest on Lachlan."

The minister's head was buried in his hands, but his heart was with Marget.

"It's a strange book, the Bible, and no the book we would have made, to judge by oor bit creeds and confessions. It's like the head of oats in the harvest time. There's the ear that holds the grain and keeps it safe, and that's the history; and there's often not much nutriment in it; then there's the corn lying in the ear, which is the Evan-

gel from Eden to Revelation, and that is the bread o' the soul. But they must be threshed first and the chaff cleaned off. It's a bonnie sight to see pure grain fallin' like a runnin' brook on the corn-room floor, and a glint o' the sun through the window turnin' it into gold. But the dust o' the chaff-room is more than anybody can abide, and the chaff's worth nothin' when the corn's awa'."

"Ye mean," said the minister, "that my study is the threshing mill, and that some of the chaff has got into the pulpit."

"Ye're no offended?" and Marget's voice trembled.

Then the minister lifted his head and laughed aloud with joy, while a swift flash of humor lit up Marget's face.

"You have been the voice of God to me this day, Mrs. Howe, but if I give up my 'course,' the people will misunderstand, for I know everything I gave was true, and I would give it all again if it were expedient."

"No fear, Maister Carmichael; nobody misunderstands that loves, and the folk all love ye, and the man that holds ye dearest is Lachlan Campbell. I saw the look in his eye that cannot be mistaken."

"I'll go to him this very day," and the minister leaped to his feet.

"Ye'll no regret it," said Marget, "for God will give ye peace."

Lachlan did not see the minister coming, for he was busy with a lamb that had lost its way and hurt itself. Carmichael marked with a growing tenderness at his heart how gently the old man washed and bound up the wounded leg, all the time crooning to the frightened creature in the sweet Gaelic speech, and also how he must needs give the lamb a drink of warm milk before he set it free.

When he rose from his work of mercy he faced the minister.

For an instant Lachlan hesitated, and then at the look on Carmichael's face, he held out both his hands.

"This iss a goot day for me, and I bid you ten thousand welcomes."

But the minister took the first word.

"You and I, Lachlan, have not seen eye to eye about some things lately, and I am not here to argue which is nearer the truth. But once I spoke rudely to you, and often I have spoken unwisely in my sermons. You are an old man, and I am a young, and I ask you to forgive me and to pray that both of us may be kept near the heart of our Lord, whom we love, and who loves us."

No man can be so courteous as a Celt, and Lachlan was of the pure Highland breed, kindest of friends, fiercest of foes.

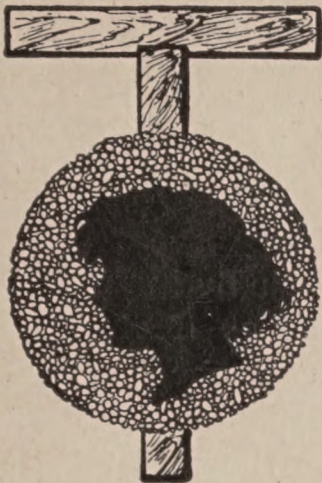
"You have done a beautiful deed this day, Maister Carmichael, and the grace of God must have been exceeding abundant in your heart. It iss this man that asks your forgiveness, for I wass full of pride, and did not speak to you as an old man should; but God iss my witness that I would have plucked out my right eye for your sake. You will say every word God gives you, and I will take as much as God gives me, and there will be a covenant between us as long as we live."

They knelt together on the earthen floor of that Highland cottage, the old school and the new, before one Lord, and the only difference in their prayers was that the young man prayed they might keep the faith once delivered unto the saints, while the burden of the old man's prayer was that they might be led into all truth.

Lachlan's portion that evening ought to have been the slaying of Sisera, from the Book of Judges, but instead he read, to Flora's amazement — it was the night before she left her home — the thirteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians, and twice he repeated to himself, "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face."



HIS BITTER SHAME.



THE Free Kirk people were very proud of their vestry because the Established Church had none, and because it was reasonably supposed to be the smallest in Scotland. When the minister, who touched five feet eleven, and the beadle, who was three inches taller, as-

sembled for the procession, with the precentor, a man of fair proportions, there was no waste ground in that room, and any messenger from the church door had to be selected with judgment. "Step up, Airchie man, to the vestry," Burnbrae would say to the one undersized man in Drumtochty, "and tell the minister no to forget the Jews. Ye can push in fine, but it would beat me to get by the door. It's a bonnie bit room, but three folk stannin' makes it contracted for another man."

It was eight feet by eight, and consisted largely of two doors and a fire-place, and its chief glory was a portrait of Dr. Chalmers, whose face, dimly seen in the light of the lamp, was a charter of authority, and raised the proceedings to the level of history. Lockers on either side of the mantel-piece contained the church library, which abounded in the lives of Scottish worthies. Where there was neither grate nor door, a narrow board ran along the wall, on which it was simply a point of honor to seat the twelve deacons, who met once a month to raise the Sustentation Fund by modest, heroic sacrifices of hard-working people, and to keep the slates on the church roof in winter. When they had nothing else to do, they talked about the stove which "came out in '43," and, when it was in good humor, would raise the temperature one degree above freezing. Seating the court was a work of art, and could only be achieved by the repression

of the smaller men, who looked out from the loop-holes of retreat, the projection of bigger men on to their neighbor's knees, and the absolute elimination of Archie Moncur, whose voice made motions on temperance from the lowest depths. Netherton was always the twelfth man to arrive, and nothing could be done till he was safely settled. Only some six inches were reserved at the end of the bench, and he was a full sitter, but he had discovered a trick of sitting sideways and screwing his leg against the opposite wall, that secured the court as well as himself in their places on the principle of a compressed spring. When this operation was completed, Burnbrae used to say to the minister, who sat in the middle, on a cane chair before the tiniest of tables — the living was small, and the ministers never grew fat till they left:

"We're fine and comfortable noo, Moderator, and ye can begin business as soon as ye like."

As there were only six elders, they could sit in state, besides leaving a vacant space for any penitents who came to confess their sins and receive absolution, or some catechumen who wished to be admitted to the sacrament. Carmichael used to say that a meeting of Session affected his imagination, and would have made an interior for Rembrandt. On one side of the table sat the men who represented the piety of the district and were supposed to be "far ben" in the Divine fellowship, and on the other side some young girl in her loneliness, who wrung her handkerchief in terror of this dreaded spiritual court, and hoped within her heart that no elder would ask her "effectual calling" from the Shorter Catechism; while the little lamp, hanging from the ceiling and swinging gently in the wind that had free access, cast a fitful light on the fresh, tearful face of the girl, and the hard, weather-beaten countenances of the elders, composed into a serious gravity not untouched by tenderness. They were little

else than laboring men, but no one was elected to that court unless he had given pledges of godliness, and they bore themselves as men who had the charge of souls.

The little Sanhedrim had within it the school of Hillel, which was swayed by mercy, and its Rabbi was Burnbrae; and the school of Shammai, whose rule was inflexible justice, and its Rabbi was Lachlan Campbell. Burnbrae was a big-hearted man, with a fatherly manner, and had a genius for dealing with "young communicants."

"Weel, Jessie, we're awfu' pleased to think ye're goin' forward, and the Dominie was tellin' me just last week that ye did your work at school grand, and know your Bible from end to end. It'll be no easy to ask the like o' you questions, but ye mind Abraham, Jessie."

"Ou ay," and Jessie is all alert, although she is afraid to look up.

"What was the name o' his wife, noo?"

"Sarah, and their son was Isaac."

"That's right; and what about Isaac's wife?"

"Isaac married Rebekah, and they had two sons, Jacob and Esau," and the girl takes a shy glance at the honest elder, and begins to feel at home.

"Domsie wasn't far wrong, I see, but it's no possible ye could tell us the names o' Jacob's sons; it's maybe no fair to ask such a tough question," knowing all the while that this was a test case of Domsie's.

When Jessie reached Benjamin, Burnbrae could not contain himself.

"It's no use tryin' to stick Jessie wi' the Bible, neighbors; we 'ill see what she can do wi' the Catechism. Ye're no the lassie that said the questions from beginnin' to end wi' two mistakes, are ye?"

Yes, she was, and dared him to come on, for Jessie has forgotten the minister and all the Session.

"The elders would like to hear 'What is the Lord's Supper?'"

"That's it; and Jessie, my woman, give us the 'worthy receiving.'"

Jessie achieves another triumph, and is now ready for anything.

"Ye have the Word weel stored in your mind, lassie, and ye must keep it in your life, and do not forget that Christ is a good Maister."

"I'll do my best," and Jessie declared that Burnbrae had been as kind as if she had been his own bairn, and that she "wasn't feared at all."

But her trial is not over; the worst is to come.

Lachlan began where Burnbrae ended, and very soon had Jessie on the rack.

"How old will you be?"

"Eighteen next Martinmas."

"And why will you be coming to the sacrament?"

"My mither thought it was time," with a threatening of tears as she looked at the face in the corner.

"Ye will maybe tell the Session what hass been your 'lawwork' and how long ye have been at Sinai."

"I don't know what ye're askin'. I was never oot o' Drumtochty," and Jessie breaks down utterly.

"I do not think, Moderator, we ought to ask such questions," broke in Burnbrae, who could not see a little one put to confusion; "an' I cannot mind them in the Gospels. There's one commandment Jessie keeps weel, as I can testeeify, and that's the fifth, for there's no a better daughter in Drumtochty. I move, Moderator, she get her token; don't cry, poor woman, for ye've done weel, and the Session's rael satisfied."

"It wass Dr. John's mark I wass trying the girl by," explained Lachlan, after Jessie had gone away comforted. "And it iss a goot mark, oh, yes, and very searching."

"You will maybe not know what it iss, Moderator," and Lachlan regarded the minister with austere superiority, for it was the winter of the feud.

No, he did not, nor any of the Session, being all sober Scotchmen, except Donald Menzies, who was at home.

"It iss broken bones, and Dr. John did preach three hours upon it at Auchindarroch Fast, and there wass not many went to the sacrament on that occasion.

"Broken bones iss a fine mark to begin with, and the next will be doubts. But there iss a deeper," continued Lachlan, warming to his subject, "oh, yes, far deeper; and I heard of it when I wass North for the sheep, and I will not be forgetting that day with Janet Macfarlane.

"I knew she wass a professor, and I wass looking for her marks, but it wass not for me to have been searching her; it wass that woman that should have been trying me."

A profound silence wrapt the Session.

"'Janet,' I said, 'have ye had many doubts?'

"'Doubts, Lachlan? Wass that what you asked? I have had desertions, and one will be for six months.'

"So I saw she wass far beyond me, for I dare not be speaking about desertions."

Two minutes after the minister pronounced the benediction, and no one had offered any remark in the interval.

It seemed to the elders that Lachlan dealt hardly with young people and those who had gone astray, but they learned one evening that his justice had at least no partiality. Burnbrae said afterwards that Lachlan "looked like a ghost comin' in at the door," but he sat in silence in the shadow, and no one marked the agony on his face till the end.

"If that iss all the business, Moderator, I have to bring a case of discipline before the Session, and ask them to do their duty. It iss known to me that a young woman who hass been a member of this church hass left her home and gone into the far country. There will be no use in summoning her to appear before the Session, for she will never be seen again in this parish. I move that she

be cut off from the roll, and her name iss" — and Lachlan's voice broke, but in an instant he recovered himself — "her name iss Flora Campbell."

Carmichael confessed to me that he was stricken dumb, and that Lachlan's ashy face held him with an awful fascination.

It was Burnbrae that first found a voice, and showed that night the fine delicacy of heart that may be hidden behind a plain exterior.

"Moderator, this is a terrible calamity that has befallen oor brither, and I'm feelin' as if I had lost a bairn o' my own, for a sweeter lassie did not cross oor kirk door. None o' us want to know what has happened, or where she has gone, and no a word o' this will cross oor lips. Her faither's done more than could be expected o' mortal man, and now we have oor duty. It's no the way o' this Session to cut off any member o' the flock at a stroke, and we'll no begin with Flora Campbell. I move, Moderator, that her case be left to her faither and yerself, and oor neighbor may depend on it that Flora's name and his own will be mentioned in oor prayers every mornin' and night till the good Shepherd o' the sheep brings her home."

Burnbrae paused, and then, with tears in his voice — men do not weep in Drumtochty — "With the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption."

The minister took the old man's arm and led him into the manse, and set him in the big chair by the study fire. "Thank God, Lachlan, we are friends now; tell me about it as if I were your son and Flora's brother."

The father took a letter out of an inner pocket with a trembling hand, and this is what Carmichael read by the light of the lamp:

"Dear Father:—When this reaches you I will be in London, and not worthy to cross your door. Do not be always angry with me, and try to forgive me, for you will not be troubled any more by my dancing or dressing. Do not think that I will be blaming you, for

you have been a good father to me, and said what you would be considering right, but it is not easy for a man to understand a girl. Oh, if I had had my mother, then she would have understood me, and I would not have crossed you! Forget poor Flora's foolishness, but you will not forget her, and maybe you will still pray for me. Take care of the geraniums for my sake, and give the lamb her milk that you called after me. I will never see you again, in this world or the next, nor my mother . . . (here the letter was much blotted). When I think that there will be no one to look after you, and have the fire burning for you on winter nights, I will be rising to come back. But it is too late, too late! Oh, the disgrace I will be bringing on you in the Glen! Your unworthy daughter,
Flora Campbell."

"This is a fiery trial, Lachlan, and I cannot even imagine what you are suffering. But do not despair, for that is not the letter of a bad girl. Perhaps she was impatient, and has been led astray. But Flora is good at heart, and you must not think she is gone forever."

Lachlan groaned, the first moan he had made, and then he tottered to his feet.

"You are very kind, Maister Carmichael, and so wass Burnbrae, and I will be thankful to you all, but you do not understand. Oh, no, you do not understand." Lachlan caught hold of a chair and looked the minister in the face.

"She hass gone, and there will be no coming back. You would not take her name from the roll of the church, and I will not be meddling with that book. But I have blotted out her name from my Bible, where her mother's name iss written and mine. She has wrought confusion in Israel and in an elder's house, and I . . . I have no daughter. But I loved her; she never knew how I loved her, for her mother would be looking at me from her eyes."

The minister walked with Lachlan to the foot of the hill on which his cottage stood, and after they had shaken hands in silence, he watched the old man's figure in the cold moonlight till he disappeared in the forsaken home, where the fire had gone out on the hearth, and neither love nor hope was waiting for a broken heart.

The railway did not think it worth while to come to Drumtochty, and we were cut off from the lowlands by miles of forests, so our manners retained the fashion of the former age. Six elders, besides the minister, knew the tragedy of Flora Campbell, and never opened their lips. Mrs. Macfadyen, who was our newspaper, and understood her duty, refused to pry into this secret. The pity of the Glen went out to Lachlan, but no one even looked a question as he sat alone in his pew or came down on a Saturday afternoon to the village shop for his week's provisions. London friends thought me foolish about my adopted home, but I asked them whether they could find such perfect good manners in Belgravia, and they were silent. My Drumtochty neighbors would have played an awkward part in a drawing-room, but never have I seen in all my wanderings men and women of truer courtesy or tenderer heart.

"It makes my heart sore to see him," Mrs. Macfadyen said to me one day, "so bowed and dejected, him that was that tidy and firm. His hair's turned white in a month, and he's away to nothing in his clothes. But least said is soonest mended. It's not right to interfere wi' anither's sorrow, and it would be an awfu' sin to miscall a young lassie. We must just hope that Flora 'ill soon come back, for if she doesn't, Lachlan 'ill no be long with us. He's sayin' nothin', and all respect him for it; but onybody can see that his heart is breakin'."

We were helpless till Marget Howe met Lachlan in the shop and read his sorrow at a glance. She went home to Whinnie Knowe in great distress.

"It was woeful to see the old man gatherin' his bit things wi' a shakin' hand, and speakin' to me aboot the weather, and all the time his eyes were sayin', 'Flora, Flora!'"

"Where do ye think the young hussy is, Marget?"

"Nobody needs to know, Weelum, an' ye

must not speak that way, for whatever's come over her, she's dear to Lachlan and to God. It's laid on me to visit Lachlan, for I'm thinking oor Father did not comfort us withoot expectin' that we would comfort other folk."

When Marget came round the corner of Lachlan's cottage, she found Flora's plants laid out in the sun, and her father watering them on his knees. One was ready to die, and for it he had made a shelter with his plaid.

He was taken unawares, but in a minute he was leading Marget in with hospitable words.

"It iss kind of you to come to an old man's house, Mistress Howe, and it iss a very warm day. You will not care for speerits, but I am very goot at making tea."

Marget was not as other women, and she spoke at once.

"Maister Campbell, ye will believe that I have come in the love of God, and because we have both been afflicted. I had one son, and he is gone; ye had one daughter, and she is gone. I know where George is, and am satisfied. I doubt sorely your sorrow is deeper than mine."

"Would to God that she wass lying in the kirk-yard; but I will not speak of her. She iss not anything to me this day. See, I will show you what I have done, for she hass been a black shame to her name."

He opened the Bible, and there was Flora's name scored with wavering strokes, but the ink had run as if it had been mingled with tears.

Marget's heart burned within her at the sight, and perhaps she could hardly make allowance for Lachlan's blood and theology.

"This is what ye have done, and ye let a woman see your work! Ye are an old man, and in sore travail, but I tell ye before God ye have the greater shame. Just twenty years o' age this spring and her mither dead. No woman to watch over her, and she wandered from the fold, and all ye can do is to

take her oot o' your Bible. Woe is me if oor Father had blotted oot oor names from the Book o' Life when we left his house! But he sent his own Son to seek us, and a weary road he came. I tell ye, a man wouldn't leave a sheep to perish as ye have cast off your own bairn! Ye're worse than Simon the Pharisee, for Mary was no kin to him. Poor Flora, to have such a father!"

"Who will be telling you that I wass a Pharisee?" cried Lachlan, quivering in every limb and grasping Marget's arm.

"Forgive me, Lachlan, forgive me. It was the thought o' the misguided lassie carried me, for I didna come to upbraid ye."

But Lachlan had sunk into a chair and had forgotten her.

"She hass the word, and God will have smitten the pride of my heart, for it iss Simon that I am. I wass hard on my child, and I wass hard on the minister, and there wass none like me. The Lord has laid my name in the dust, and I will be angry with her. But she iss the scapegoat for my sins, and hass gone into the desert. God be merciful to me a sinner." And then Marget understood no more, for the rest was in Gaelic, but she heard Flora's name, with another she took to be her mother's, twined together.

So Marget knew it would be well with Lachlan yet, and she wrote this letter:

"My Dear Lassie:—Ye know that I was aye your friend, and I am writing to say that your father loves ye more than ever, and is wearing out his heart for the sight o' your face. Come back, or he'll die through want o' his bairn. The Glen is bright and bonny now, for the purple heather is on the hills, and down below the golden corn, with bluebell and poppy flowers between. Nobody 'ill ask ye where ye've been or anything else; there's not a bairn in the place that's not wearying to see ye; and, Flora, lassie, if there will be such gladness in our wee Glen when ye come home, what think ye o' the joy in the Father's house? Start the very minute that ye get this letter; your father bids ye come, and I'm writing this in place o' your mother.
Marget Howe."

Marget went out to tend the flowers while Lachlan read the letter, and when he gave

it back the address was written in his own hand.

He went as far as the top of the hill with Marget, and watched her on the way to the post-office till she was only a speck on the road.

When he entered his cottage the shadows were beginning to fall, and he remembered it would soon be night.

"It iss in the dark that Flora will be coming, and she must know that her father iss waiting for her."

He cleaned and trimmed with anxious hand a lamp that was kept for show and had never been used. Then he selected from his books Edwards' "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," and "Coles on the Divine Sovereignty," and on them he laid the large family Bible out of which Flora's name had been blotted. This was the stand on which he set the lamp in the window, and every night till Flora returned its light shone down the steep path that ascended to her home, like the Divine Love from the open door of our Father's house.

LIKE AS A FATHER.



It was only by physical force and a free use of personalities that the Kildrummie passengers could be entrained at the Junction, and the Drumtochty men were always the last to capitulate.

They watched the main line train that had brought them from Muirtown disappear in the distance, and then broke into groups to discuss the cattle sale at leisure, while Peter, the factotum of the little Kildrummie branch, drove his way through their midst with offensive pieces of luggage, and abused them by name without respect of persons.

"It's most aggravatin', Drumsheugh, that

ye 'ill stand there grumblin' at the prices, as if ye were a poor cotter body that had sold her one cow, and us twelve minutes late. Man, get into your carriage; he 'ill no be fat that buys from you, I'll wager."

"Peter's in an awfu' excitement the night, neighbors," Drumsheugh would respond, after a long pause; "ye would think he was a mail guard to hear him speak. Mind ye, I'm no goin' to shove behind if the engine sticks, for I have no time. He needs a bit takin' doon," and Drumsheugh settles himself in his seat, "or else there would be no livin' wi' him."

Peter escaped this winged shaft, for he had detected a woman in the remote darkness.

"Keep us all, woman! what are ye trampin' about there for, oot o' a body's sight? I near set off withoot ye."

Then Peter recognized her face, and his manner softened of a sudden.

"Come away, lassie, come away; I didn't know ye at the moment, but I heard ye had been visitin' in the south. The third is terrible full wi' those Drumtochty lads, and ye 'ill hear nothing but Drumsheugh's cattle; ye 'ill maybe be as handy in oor second." And Flora Campbell stepped in unseen.

Between the Junction and Kildrummie Peter wandered along the foot-board, collecting tickets and identifying passengers. He was generally in fine trim on the way up, and took ample revenge for the insults of the departure. But it was supposed that Peter had taken Drumsheugh's withering sarcasm to heart, for he attached himself to the second, and was invisible to the expectant third till the last moment.

"Ye've had a long journey, Miss Cammil, and ye must be nearly tired oot; just ye sit still till the folk get away, and the good wife and me would be proud if ye took a cup o' tea wi' us afore ye started home. I'll come for ye as soon as I get the van emptied and my little bits o' business finished."

Peter hurried up to his cottage in such

hot haste that his wife came out in great alarm.

"No, there's nothing wrong; it's the opposite way this night. Ye mind o' Flora Cammil, that left her father, and none o' the Drumtochty folk would say onything about her. Weel, she's in the train, and I've asked her up to rest, and she was glad to come, poor thing. So give her a good welcome, woman, and the best in the house, for ours 'ill be the first roof she 'ill be under on her way home."

Our women do not kiss one another like the city ladies; but the motherly grip of Mary Bruce's hand sent a thrill to Flora's heart.

"Noo, I call this real kind o' ye, Miss Cammil, to come in withoot ceremony, and I'd be terrible pleased if ye would do it any time you're travelin'. The rail is more than ordinar' fatiguin', and a cup o' tea 'ill set ye up;" and Mary had Flora in the best chair and was loading her plate with homely dainties.

Peter would speak of nothing but the new engine that was coming, and was to place the Kildrummie branch beyond ridicule forever, and on this great event he continued without intermission till he parted with Flora on the edge of the pine woods that divided Drumtochty from Kildrummie.

"Good-night to ye, Miss Cammil, and thank ye again for your visit. Bring the old man wi' ye next time ye're passin', though I'm afraid ye've been deafened wi' the engine."

Flora took Peter's hand, that was callous and rough with the turning of brakes and the coupling of chains.

"It wass not your new engine you wass thinking about this night, Peter Bruce, but a poor girl that iss in trouble. I have not the words, but I will be remembering your house, oh, yes, as long as I live."

Twice Peter stood on his way home; the first time he slapped his leg and chuckled.

"It was right clever o' me; a whole car-

riage o' Drumtochty lads, and not one o' them ever had a glimpse o' her."

At the second stoppage he drew his hand across his eyes.

"Poor lassie! I hope her father 'ill be kind to her, for she's sore broken, and looks more like death than life."

No one can desire a sweeter walk than through a Scottish pine wood in late September, where you breathe the healing, resinous air, and the ground is crisp and springy beneath your feet, and gentle animals dart away on every side, and here and there you come on an open space with a pool, and a brake of gorse. Many a time on market days Flora had gone singing through these woods, plucking a posy of wild flowers and finding a mirror in every pool, as young girls will; but now she trembled and was afraid. The rustling of the trees in the darkness, the hooting of an owl, the awful purity of the moonlight in the glades, the cold sheen of the water, were to her troubled conscience omens of judgment. Had it not been for the kindness of Peter Bruce, which was a pledge of human forgiveness, there would have been no heart in her to dare that wood, and it was with a sob of relief she escaped from the shadow and looked upon the old Glen once more, bathed from end to end in the light of the harvest moon. Beneath her ran our little river, spanned by its quaint old bridge; away on the right the Parish Kirk peeped out from a clump of trees; half way up the Glen the clachan lay surrounded by patches of corn; and beyond were the moors, with a shepherd's cottage that held her heart. Two hours ago squares of light told of warmth and welcome within; but now, as Flora passed one house after another, it seemed as if every one she knew was dead, and she was forgotten in her misery. Her heart grew cold, and she longed to lie down and die, when she caught the gleam of a lighted window. Some one was living still to know she had repented, and she knelt down among

the flowers with her ear to the glass to hear the sound of a human voice. Archie Moncur had come home late from a far-away job, but he must needs have worship with his sister before they went to bed, and well did he choose the Psalm that night. Flora's tears rained upon the mignonette as the two old people sang:

"When Sion's bondage God turned back,
As men that dreamed were we;
Then filled with laughter was our mouth,
Our tongue with melody;"

while the fragrance of the flowers went up as incense unto God.

All the way along the Glen the last words of the Psalm still rang in her ears, "Rejoicing shall return," but as she touched the footpath to her home, courage failed her. Marget had written for her dead mother, but no one could speak for her father. If he refused her entrance, then it had been better for her to have died in London. A turn of the path brought her within sight of the cottage, and her heart came into her mouth, for the kitchen window was a blaze of light. A moment she feared Lachlan might be ill, but in the next she understood, and in the greatness of her joy she ran the rest of the way. When she reached the door her strength had departed, and she was not able to knock. But there was no need, for the dogs, who never forget nor cast off, were bidding her welcome with short, joyous yelps of delight, and she could hear her father feeling for the latch, which for once could not be found, and saying nothing but "Flora, Flora!"

She had made up some kind of speech, but the only word she ever said was "Father," for Lachlan, who had never even kissed her all the days of her youth, clasped her in his arms and sobbed out blessings over her head, while the dogs licked her hands with their soft, kindly tongues.

"It is a peety you have not the Gaelic," Flora said to Marget afterwards; "it iss the best of all languages for loving. There are

fifty words for darling, and my father would be calling me every one that night I came home."

Lachlan was so carried with joy, and fire-light is so hopeful, that he had not seen the signs of sore sickness on Flora's face, but the morning light undeceived him, and he was sadly dashed.

"You will be very tired after your long journey, Flora, and it iss goot for you to rest. There is a man in the village I am wanting to see, and he will maybe be comin' back with me."

When Lachlan reached his place of prayer, he lay on the ground and cried, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, and spare her for thy servant's sake, and let me not lose her after thou hast brought her back and hast opened my heart. . . . Take her not till she has seen that I love her. . . . Give me time to do her kindness for the past when I oppressed her. . . . Oh, turn away thy judgment on my hardness, and let not the child suffer for her father's sins." Then he arose and hastened for the doctor.

It was afternoon before he could come, but the very sight of his face, which was as the sun in its strength, let light into the room where Lachlan sat at the bedside holding Flora's hand, and making woeful pretense that she was not ill.

"Weel, Flora, ye've got back from your visit, and I tell ye we've all missed ye most terrible. I doubt those south country folk haven't been feedin' ye ony too weel, or maybe it was the town air. It never agrees wi' me. I'm half choked all the time I'm in Glasgow; and as for London, there's too many folk to the square yard for health."

All the time he was busy at his work, and no man could do it better or quicker.

"Lachlan, what are ye travelin' in and out there for, with a face that would sour milk? What ails ye, man? Ye're surely not imaginin' that Flora's goin' to leave ye? Aye, but it's most provokin' that if a body

has a bit touch o' illness in Drumtochty, their friends take to prophesyin' death."

Lachlan had crept over to Flora's side, and both were waiting.

"No, no; ye know I never tell lies like the grand city doctors, and I'll warrant Flora 'ill be in kirk afore Martinmas, and trippin' up the hills as hardy as a Highland pony by the new year."

Flora puts an arm around her father's neck and draws down his face to hers, but the doctor is looking another way.

"Don't bother wi' medicine; give her plenty o' fresh milk and plenty o' air. There's no livin' for a doctor wi' that Drumtochty air. It starts from the Moray Firth, and sweeps down Badenoch, and comes over the moor o' Rannoch, and across the Grampians. There's the salt o' the sea, and the fresh air o' the hills, and the smell o' the heather, and the bloom o' many a flower in it. If there's no disease in the organs o' the body, a puff o' Drumtochty air would bring back a man from the gates o' death."

"You have made two hearts glad this day, Doctor MacLure," said Lachlan, outside the door, "and I'm calling you Barnabas."

"Ye've called me worse names than that in your time," and the doctor mounted his horse. "It's done me a world o' good to see Flora in her home again, and I'll give Marget Howe a call in passin' and send her up to have a chat."

When Marget came, Flora told her the history of her letter.



The only word she ever said was "Father."—See page 44.

"It wass a beautiful night in London, but I will be thinking that there iss no living person caring whether I die or live, and I wass considering how I could die, for there iss nothing so hopeless as to have no friend

in a great city. It iss often that I have been alone on the moor, and no man within miles, but I wass never lonely; oh, no, I had plenty of good company. I would sit down beside a burn, and the trout will swim out from below a stone, and the cattle will come to drink, and the muirfowl will be crying to each other, and the sheep will be bleating, oh, yes, and there are the bees all round, and a string of wild ducks above your head. It iss a busy place, a moor, and there iss not one of the animals will hurt you. No, the big Highlanders will only look at you, and go away to their pasture.

“But it iss weary to be in London, and no one to speak a kind word to you, and I will be looking at the crowd that iss always passing, and I will not see one familiar face, and when I looked in at the lighted windows the people were all sitting round the table, but there wass no place for me. Millions and millions of people, and not one to say ‘Flora,’ and not one sore heart if I died that night. Then a strange thing happened, as you will be considering, but it iss good to be a Highlander, for we see visions. You will know that a wounded deer will try to hide herself, and I crept into the shadow of a church and wept. Then the people and the noise and the houses passed away like the mist on the hill, and I wass walking to the kirk with my father, oh, yes, and I saw you all in your places, and I heard the Psalms, and I could see through the window the green fields, and the trees on the edge of the moor. And I saw my home, with the dogs before the door, and the flowers that I planted, and the lamb coming for her milk, and I heard myself singing, and I awoke. But there wass singing, oh, yes, and beautiful, too, for the dark church wass open, and the light wass falling over my head from the face of the Virgin Mary. When I arose she wass looking down at me in the darkness, and then I knew that there wass service in the church, and this wass the hymn:

“‘There is a fountain filled with blood.’

So I went in and sat down at the door. The sermon wass on the Prodigal Son, but there iss only one word I remember. ‘You are not forgotten or cast off,’ the preacher said, ‘you are missed,’ and then he will come back to it again, and it wass always ‘missed, missed, missed.’ Sometimes he will say, ‘If you had a plant, and you had taken great care of it, and it wass stolen, would you not miss it?’ And I will be thinking of my geraniums, and sayin’ ‘yes’ in my heart. And then he will go on, ‘If a shepherd wass counting his sheep, and there wass one short, does he not go out to the hill and seek for it?’ and I will see my father coming back with that lamb that lost its mother. My heart wass melting within me, but he will still be pleading, ‘If a father had a child, and she left her home and lost herself in the wicked city, she will still be remembered in the old house, and her chair will be there,’ and I will be seeing my father all alone, with the Bible before him, and the dogs will lay their heads on his knee, but there iss no Flora. So I slipped out into the darkness and cried ‘Father,’ but I could not go back, and I knew not what to do. But this wass ever in my ear, ‘missed,’ and I wass wondering if God will be thinking of me. ‘Perhaps there may be a sign,’ I said, and I went to my room, and I will see the letter. It wass not long before I will be in the train, and all the night I held your letter in my hand, and when I wass afraid I will read, ‘Your father is wearying for you,’ and I will say, ‘This iss my warrant.’ Oh, yes, and God wass very good to me, and I did not want for friends all the way home.

“The English guard will be noticing me cry, and he will take care of me all the night, and see me off at Muirtown, and this iss what he will say, as the train was leaving, in his cheery English way, ‘There’s a good time coming,’ and Peter Bruce will be waiting for me at the Junction, and Maister Moncur will be singing a Psalm to keep up my heart, and I will see the light, and then

I will know that the Lord hass had mercy upon me. That iss all I have to tell you, Marget, for the rest I will be saying to God."

"But there iss smething I must be telling," said Lachlan, coming in, "and it iss not easy."

He brought over the Bible and opened it at the family registers; then he laid it down before Flora, and bowed his head on the bed.

"Will you ever be able to forgive your father?"

"Give me the pen, Marget;" and Flora wrote for a minute, but Lachlan never moved.

When he lifted his head, this was what he read in a vacant space:

FLORA CAMPBELL.

MISSSED APRIL, 1873.

FOUND SEPTEMBER, 1873.

"Her father fell on her neck and kissed her."

AS A LITTLE CHILD.



DRUMTOCHTY made up its mind slowly upon any new-comer, and for some time looked into the far distance when his name was mentioned. He himself was struck with the studied indifference of the parish, and lived under the delusion that he had escaped notice. Perhaps he might have felt uncomfortable if he had suspected that he was under a microscope, and the keenest eyes in the country were watching every movement at kirk and market. His knowledge of theology, his preference in artificial manures, his wife's dress, his skill in cattle, and his manner in the Kildrummie train, went as evidence in the case, and were duly weighed.

Some morning the floating opinion suddenly crystallized in the kirk-yard, and there is only one historical instance in which judgment was reversed. It was a strong proof of Lachlan Campbell's individuality that he impressed himself twice on the parish, and each time with a marked adjective.

Lachlan had been superintending the theology of the Glen and correcting our ignorance from an unapproachable height for two years before the word went forth, but the Glen had been thinking.

"Lachlan is a careful shepherd, and fine wi' the ewes at the lambin' time, there's no doubt o' that; but I cannot bear himself. Ye would think there was no religion in the parish till he came from Auchindarroch. What say ye, Domsie?"

"Campbell's a censorious body, Drumsheugh," and Domsie shut his snuff-box lid with a snap.

Drumsheugh nodded to the fathers of our commonwealth, and they went into kirk with silent satisfaction. Lachlan had been classified, and Peter Bruce, who prided himself on keeping in touch with Drumtochty, passed the word round the Kildrummie train next market night.

"Ye haven't that censorious body, Lachlan Campbell, wi' ye the night," thrusting his head in on the thirds.

"There's nothing Peter doesn't know," Hillocks remarked with admiration afterwards; "he's as good as the 'Advertiser.'"

When Flora had come home, and Drumtochty resumed freedom of criticism, I noticed for the first time a certain vacillation in its treatment of Lachlan.

"He's plucked up his spirits most extraordinary," Hillocks explained, "and he whipped by me like a three-year-old last Sabbath."

"'I'm glad to hear the Miss is comin' round fine,' says I.

"'It's the folk o' Drumtochty has made her well. God bless you, for you have done

good for evil,' and wi' that he was off before I could find a word.

"He's changed, the body, some way or other, and there's a kind o' warmth aboot him ye cannot get over."

Next day I turned into Mrs. Macfadyen's cottage for a cup of tea and the smack of that wise woman's conversation, but was not able to pass the inner door for the sight which met my eyes.

Lachlan was sitting on a chair in the middle of the kitchen with Elsie, Mrs. Macfadyen's pet child, on his knee, and their heads so close together that his white hair was mingling with her burnished gold. An odor of peppermint floated out at the door, and Elsie was explaining to Lachlan, for his guidance at the shop, that the round drops were a better bargain than the black and white rock.

When Lachlan had departed, with gracious words on his lips, and a very sticky imprint on his right cheek, I settled down in the big chair, beyond the power of speech, and Mrs. Macfadyen opened the mystery.

"Ye may well look, for two months ago I wouldn't have believed this day, though I had seen him wi' my own eyes.

"It was just this time last year that he came here on his elder's visitation, and he catches the bairn in this very kitchen.

"'Elsbeth,' says he — it was Elsie the day, ye mind — 'do ye know that ye're an original sinner?'

"It was nightfall afore she got over the fright, and when she saw him on the road next Sabbath, she cowered in behind my gown, and cried till I thought her heart would break.

"'It's miserable work for Christ's elder,' says Jeems, 'to put the fear o' death on a bairn, and I'm thinkin' he would not get much thanks from his Master, if he was here.' And Jeems wasn't far wrong, though, of course, I told him to keep a quiet tongue and no contrary the elder.

"Weel, I sees Lachlan comin' up the road

the day, and I ran out to catch Elsie and hide her in the cow-house. But I might have saved myself the trouble; afore I got to the garden gate they were comin' up as friendly as ye like, and Lachlan was callin' Elsie his bonnie pet.

"If he hadn't a bag o' peppermints — but it wasn't that won Elsie's heart. No, no, dogs and bairns can read folks' faces, and make no mistakes. As soon as I saw Lachlan's eyes I knew he was a new man.

"How has it come about? That's easy to guess. Six months ago Lachlan didn't know what father meant, and the heart was wizened in the breast o' him wi' pride and divinity.

"He knows now, and I'm fancyin' that no man can be a right father to his own without bein' akin to every bairn he sees. It was Flora he was pettin', ye see, the day, and he's learned his trade well, though it cost him a sore lesson."

Wonderful stories circulated through the Glen, and were told in the church-yard of a Sabbath morning, concerning the transformation of Lachlan Campbell.

"One o' my wee lassies fell comin' down the near road from Whinnie Knowe, and cut her cheek on the stones, and if Lachlan didn't wash her face and comfort her; and more, he carried her all the road to the school, and says he, in his Hieland way, 'Here is a brave little woman that has hurt herself, but she will not be cryin',' and he gave her a kiss and a penny to buy some sweeties at the shop. It minded me o' the Good Samaritan, folk." And everybody understood that Lachlan had captured Domsie for life.

"It beats all things!" said Whinnie. "I cannot make oot what's come over the cratur. Some o' the upland bairns pass oor way from school, and sometimes Lachlan 'ill meet them when he's after his sheep, and as sure as I'm stannin' here, he'll lay off stories aboot battles and fairies till the laddies 'ill hardly go home. I was tellin' Marget this

very mornin', and she says, 'Lachlan's become as a little child.' I do not agree wi' her there, but a quieter, more cautious body ye never saw."

Drumtochty was doing its best to focus Lachlan afresh, and felt the responsibility lay on Domsie, who accepted it cheerfully.

"Marget's always right, neighbors, and she's put the word on it noo. His trouble has melted Lachlan's heart, 'an' — it's in the Evangel, ye know — he's become as a little child."

This language was too figurative and imposing for the parish, but it ran henceforward in our modest speech, "He's a cautious body." Cautious, with us, meant unassuming, kindly obliging, as well as much more; and I still hear Drumsheugh pronouncing this final judgment of the Glen on Lachlan as we parted at his grave ten years later, and adding, "He 'ill be sorely missed by the bairns."

While the Glen was readjusting itself to Lachlan, I came down from a long tramp on the moor, and intended to inquire for Flora. But I was arrested on the step by the sound of Lachlan's voice in family worship.

"'This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.'"

Lachlan's voice trembled as he read, but he went on with much firmness:

"'Now his elder son was in the field.'"

"You will not be reading more of that chapter, father," interrupted Flora, with a new note of authority.

"And why not?" said Lachlan, quite humbly.

"Because you will be calling yourself the elder son and many more bad names, and I will be angry with you."

"But they are true names, and it iss good for me to know myself."

"You have just one true name, and that is father. . . . And now you will be singing a Psalm."

"There iss a book of hymns here, and maybe you will be liking one of them."

And Lachlan produced the little book Flora got in that London church when the preacher told her she was missed.

"We will not sing hymns, father, for I am remembering that you have a conscience



With Elsie on his knee.—See page 48.

against hymns, and I did not know that you had that book."

"My conscience wass sometimes better than the Bible, Flora, and if God will be sending a hymn to bind up your heart when it wass broken, it iss your father that will be wanting to sing that hymn."

"It iss here," continued Lachlan in triumph, "for I have often been reading that hymn, and I am not seeing much wrong in it."

"But each hymn hass got its own tune, father, and you will not know the way that it goes, and the doctor will not be wishing me to sing."

"You are a good girl, Flora, but you are not so clever as your father, oh, no, for I have been trying that hymn on the hill, and it will sing beautiful to a Psalm tune. You will lie still and hear."

Then Lachlan lifted up his voice in "French":

"There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains."

The singing was fairly good, with a whisper from Flora, till they came to that verse:

"Then in a nobler, sweeter song
I'll sing Thy power to save,
When this poor lisping, stammering tongue
Lies silent in the grave,"

when Lachlan seemed to lose the tune, and be falling into a coronach (funeral dirge).

"We must not be singing that to-day, father, for God iss very good to us, and I will be stronger every week, and maybe you will be saying that we are thankful in your prayer."

Then I realized my baseness, and went off on tiptoe (had the dogs been at home it had not been so easy to escape); but first I heard, "Our Father." It was a new word for Lachlan; he used to say Jehovah.

The doctor paid his last visit one frosty winter day, and was merciless on Lachlan.

"What for are ye pamperin' up this lassie, and not gettin' her doon to the kirk? It's clean disgraceful in an elder, and if I were your minister I would have ye sessioned. Losh! ye're hard enough on ither folk that are no kirk greedy."

"You will not be speaking that way next Sabbath, for it iss in her pew Flora will be sitting with her father," said Lachlan, in great spirits.

Flora caught him studying her closely for some days, as if he were taking her

measure, and he announced that he had business in Muirtown on Friday.

When he came up in the market train he was carrying a large paper parcel, and attempted a joke with Peter at a window of the third. From a critical point of view it was beneath notice, but as Lachlan's first effort it was much tasted.

"Ye 'ill believe me now, Peter, since ye've heard him. Did ye ever see such a change? It's most astonishin'."

"Man, Hillocks, do ye no see he's gotten back his daughter, and it's made him anither man?"

Lachlan showed Flora a new pair of shears he had bought in Muirtown, and a bottle of sheep embrocation, but she did not know he had hidden his parcel in the cow-house, and that he opened it four separate times on Saturday.

From daybreak on Sabbath Lachlan went in and out till he returned with Marget Howe.

"Mistress Howe iss very kind, and she will be coming to help you with your dresses, Flora, for we will be wanting you to look well this day, and here iss some small thing to keep you warm;" and Lachlan produced with unspeakable pride a jacket lined with flannel and trimmed with fur.

So her father and Marget dressed Flora for the kirk, and they went together down the path on which the light had shone that night of her return.

There were only two dog-carts in the Session, and Burnbrae was waiting with his for Flora at the foot of the hill.

"I bid ye welcome, Flora, in the name o' oor kirk. It's a glad day for your father and for us all to see you back again and strong. And now ye 'ill just get up aside me in the front, and Mistress Hoo 'ill wrap ye round, for we mustn't let ye come to any ill the first day ye're oot, or we 'ill never hear the end of it." And so the honest man went on, for he was as near the breaking as Drumtochty nature allowed.

"Everybody's pleased," said Marget to Lachlan, as they sat on the back seat and caught the faces of the people. "This is the first time I have seen the fifteenth of Luke in Drumtochty. It's a bonnie sight, and I'm thinkin' it's still bonnier in the presence o' the angels."

"Flora Cammil's in the kirk the day," and the precentor looked at Carmichael with expectation. "The folk are terribly taken up wi' Lachlan and her."

"What do ye think of the hundred and third Psalm, Robert? It would go well this mornin'."

"The very word that was on my lips, and Lachlan 'ill be lookin' for Coleshill."

Lachlan had put Flora in his old place next the wall (he would not need it again, having retired from the office of inquisitor), and sat close beside her, with great contentment on his face. The manners of Drumtochty were perfect, and no one turned his head by one inch; but Marget Howe, sitting behind in Burnbrae's pew, saw Flora's hand go out to Lachlan as the people sang:

"All thine iniquities who doth
Most graciously forgive,
Who thy diseases all and pains
Doth heal and thee relieve."

The Session met that week, and a young girl broke down utterly in her examination for the sacrament, so that not even Burnbrae could get a correct answer.

She rose in great confusion and sorrow. "I see it wouldn't be fit for the like o' me to go forward, but I had set my heart on it; it was the last thing He asked o' his friends," and she left before anyone could bid her stay.

"Moderator," said Lachlan, "it iss a great joy for me to move that Mary Macfarlane get her token, and I will be wishing that we all had her warrant, oh, yes, for there iss no warrant like love. And there iss something that I must be asking of the elders, and it iss to forgive me for my pride

in this Session. I wass thinking that I knew more than any man in Drumtochty, and wass judging God's people. But he hass had mercy upon Simon the Pharisee, and you have all been very good to me and Flora. . . . The Scripture hass been fulfilled, 'So the last shall be first, and the first last.'"

Then the minister asked Burnbrae to pray, and the Spirit descended on that good man of simple heart:

"Almighty Father, we are all thy poor and sinful bairns, who wearied o' home and went away into the far country. Forgive us, for we didn't know what we were leavin' or the sore heart we gave our Father. It was weary work to live with oor sins, but we would never have come back had it no been for oor Elder Brother. He came a long road to find us, and a sore travail he had afore he set us free. He's been a good Brother to us, and we've been a heavy charge to him. May he keep a firm hold o' us, and guide us in the right road, and bring us back if we wander, and tell us all we need to know till the gloamin' come. Gather us in then, we pray thee, and all we love, not a bairn missin', and may we sit doon forever in oor own Father's house. Amen."

As Burnbrae said amen, Carmichael opened his eyes, and had a vision which will remain with him until the day break and the shadows flee away.

The six elders — three small farmers, a tailor, a stonemason and a shepherd — were standing beneath the lamp, and the light fell like a halo on their bent heads. That poor little vestry had disappeared, and this present world was forgotten. The sons of God had come into their heritage, "for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."



THE CUNNING SPEECH OF DRUMTOCHTY.



PEECH in Drumtochty distilled slowly, drop by drop, and the faces of our men were carved in stone. Visitors, without discernment, used to pity our dullness and lay themselves out for missionary work. Before their month was over they spoke bitterly of us, as if we had deceived them, and departed with a grudge in their hearts. When Hillocks scandalized the Glen by letting his house and living in the bothie (servants' quarters), — through sheer greed of money — it was taken by a fussy little man from the South, whose control over the letter "h" was uncertain, but whose self-confidence bordered on the miraculous. As a deacon of the Social Religionists — a new denomination which had made an 'it with Sunday entertainments — and chairman of the Amalgamated Sons of Rest — a society of persons with conscientious objections to work — he was horrified at the primeval simplicity of the Glen, where no meeting of protest had been held in the memory of living man, and the ministers preached from the Bible. It was understood that he was to do his best for us, and there was curiosity in the kirk-yard.

"What like man is that English visitor ye've got, Hillocks? I hear he's flyin' aboot the Glen blabbin' and chatterin' like a starlin'."

"He's a gabby body, Drumsheugh, there's no doubt o' that, but terrible ignorant."

"Says he to me no later than yesterday, 'That's a fine field o' barley ye've there, Maister Stirton;' an' as sure as death I didn't know where to look, for it was a crop o' oats!"

"Keep us all!" said Whinnie, "he's been awfu' neglected when he was a bairn, or maybe there's a want in the poor cratur."

Next Sabbath Mr. Urijah Hopps appeared in person among the fathers — who looked at each other over his head — and enlightened them on supply and demand, the game laws, the production of cabbages for towns, the iniquity of an Established Church, and the bad metre of the Psalms of David.

"You must 'ave henterprise, or it's hall hup with you farmers."

"Ay, ay," responded Drumsheugh, after a long pause, and then every man concentrated his attention on the belfry of the kirk.

"Is there anything at all in the body, think ye, Domsie," as Mr. Hopps bustled into the kirk, "or is't all wind?"

"Three measurefuls o' nothing, Drumsheugh; I pity the poor man if Jamie Soutar gets a hold o' him."

Jamie was the cynic of the Glen — who had pricked many a wind bag — and there was a general feeling that his meeting with Mr. Hopps would not be devoid of interest. When he showed himself anxious to learn next Sabbath, any man outside Drumtochty might have been deceived, for Jamie could withdraw every sign of intelligence from his face. Our visitor fell at once into the trap, and made things plain to the meanest capacity, until Jamie elicited from the guileless Southron that he had never heard of the Act of Union; that Adam Smith was a new book he hoped to buy; that he did not know the difference between an Arminian and a Calvinist, and that he supposed the Confession of Faith was invented in Edinburgh. James was making for general literature, and had still agriculture in reserve, when Drumsheugh intervened in the humanity of his heart.

"I don't like to interrupt your conversation, Maister Hopps, but it's no very safe for ye to be standin' here so long. Oor air has a bit o' a nip in it, and is more searchin'

than down South. Jamie 'ill be askin' questions all mornin' if ye 'ill answer him, but I'm thinkin' ye 'ill be warmer in the kirk."

And Drumsheugh escorted Mr. Hopps to cover, who began to suspect that he had been turned inside out and found wanting.

Drumtochty had listened with huge delight, but without a trace of expression, and, on Mr. Hopps reaching shelter, three boxes were offered Jamie.

The group was still lost in admiration when Drumsheugh returned from his errand of mercy.

"Losh! ye've done the job this time, Jamie. Ye're an awfu' critic. Yon man 'ill keep a quiet cheep till he gets South. It passes me how a body with so little in him has the face to open his mouth."

"Ye did it well, Jamie," Domsie added; "a clean furrow from end to end."

"Toots, folk! ye're makin' too much o' it. It was light ground, no worth puttin' in a plow."

Mr. Hopps explained to me, before leaving, that he had been much pleased with the scenery of our Glen, but disappointed in the people.

"They may not be hignorant," said the little man doubtfully, "but no man

tect endless distinctions, and was ever on the watch against inaccuracy. Farmers who could state the esoteric doctrine of "spiritual independence" between the stilts of the plow, and talked familiarly of "co-ordinate jurisdiction with mutual subordin-



could call them haffable." "I don't like to interrupt your conversation, Maister Hopps."—See page 52.

It flashed on me for the first time that perhaps there may have been the faintest want of geniality in the Drumtochty manner, but it was simply the reticence of a subtle and conscientious people. Intellect with us had been brought to so fine an edge by the Shorter Catechism that it could de-

ation," were not likely to fall into the vice of generalization. When James Soutar was in good fettle he could trace the whole history of Scottish secession from the beginning, winding his way through the maze of Original Seceders and Cameronians, Burghers and Anti-Burghers—there were days

when he would include the Glassites — with unfaltering step; but this was considered a feat even in Drumtochty, and it was admitted that Jamie had “a gift o’ discreemin-ation.” We all had the gift in measure, and dared not, therefore, allow ourselves the expansive language of the South. What right had any human being to fling about superlative adjectives, seeing what a big place the world is, and how little we know? Such adjectives would have been as much out of place in our conversation as a bird of paradise among our muirfowl.

Mr. Hopps was so inspired by one of our sunsets — to his credit let that be told — that he tried to drive Jamie into extravagance.

“‘Not bad’! I call it glorious, and if it hisn’t, then I’d like to know what his.”

“Man,” replied Soutar, austere, “ye ’ill surely keep one word for the twenty-first o’ Reevelation.”

Had any native used “magnificent,” there would have been an uneasy feeling in the Glen; the man must be suffering from wind in the head, and might upset the rotation of crops, sowing his young grass after potatoes, or replacing turnip with beet-root. But nothing of that sort happened in my time; we kept ourselves well in hand. It rained in torrents elsewhere, with us it only “threatened to be wet” — some provision had to be made for the deluge. Strangers, in the pride of health, described themselves as “fit for anything,” but Hillocks, who died at ninety-two, and never had an hour’s illness, did not venture, in his prime, beyond, “Goin’ aboot, I’m thankfu’ to say, goin’ aboot.”

When one was seriously ill, he was said to be “rather ill,” and no one died in Drumtochty — “he slippit awa’.” Hell and heaven were pulpit words; in private life we spoke of the “ill place” and “oor long home.”

When the corn sprouted in the stooks one late wet harvest, and Burnbrae lost half his

capital, he only said, “It’s no lightsome,” and no congratulations on a good harvest ever extracted more from Drumsheugh than “I daren’t complain.”

Drumsheugh might be led beyond bounds in reviewing a certain potato transaction, but, as a rule, he was a master of measured speech. After the privilege of much intercourse with that excellent man, I was able to draw up his table of equivalents for the three degrees of wickedness. When there was just a suspicion of trickiness — neglecting the paling between your cattle and your neighbor’s clover field — “He’s no just the man for an elder.” If it deepened into deceit — running a “greasy” horse for an hour before selling — “He would be the better o’ anither dip.” And in the case of downright fraud — finding out what a man had offered for his farm and taking it over his head — the offender was “an ill-got wretch.” The two latter phrases were dark with theology, and even the positive degree of condemnation had an ecclesiastical flavor.

When Drumsheugh approved any one, he was content to say, “He might be worse,” a position beyond argument. On occasion he ventured upon bolder assertions: “There’s no mischief in Domsie;” and once I heard him in a white heat of enthusiasm pronounce Dr. Davidson, our parish minister, “A grand man ony way ye take him.” But he seemed ashamed after this outburst, and “shooed” the crows off the corn with needless vigor.

No Drumtochty man would commit himself to a positive statement on any subject if he could find a way of escape, not because his mind was confused, but because he was usually in despair for an accurate expression. It was told for years in the Glen, with much relish and almost funereal solemnity, how a Drumtochty witness had held his own in an ecclesiastical court.

“You are beadle in the parish of Pittendrieh,” began the advocate with a light heart, not knowing the witness’ birthplace.

"It's a fac'," after a long pause and a careful review of the whole situation.

"You remember that Sabbath when the minister of Netheraird preached?"

"Weel, I'll admit that," making a concession to justice.

"Did ye see him in the vestry?"

"I cannot deny it."

"Was he intoxicated?"

The crudeness of this question took away Drumtochty's breath, and suggested that something must have been left out in the creation of that advocate. Our men were not total abstainers, but I never heard any word so coarse and elementary as "intoxicated" used in Drumtochty. Conversation touched this kind of circumstance with delicacy and caution, for we keenly realized the limitations of human knowledge. "He had his mornin'," served all ordinary purposes, and in cases of emergency, such as Muirtown market: "Ye could see he had been tastin'." When an advocate forgot himself so far as to say "intoxicated," a Drumtochty man might be excused for being upset.

"Losh, man!" when he had recovered, "how could any right-thinkin' man swear to such an awfu' word? No, no, I daren't use that kind o' langidge; it's no prudent."

The advocate tried again, a humbler, wiser man.

"Was there a smell of drink on him?"

"Noo, since ye press me, I'll just tell ye the whole truth; it was downright stupid o' me, but as sure as I'm livin' I clean forgot to try him."

Then the chastened counsel gathered himself up for his last effort.

"Will you answer one question, sir? You are on your oath. Did you see anything unusual in Mr. MacOmish's walk? Did he stagger?"

"No," when he had spent two minutes in recalling the scene. "No, I couldn't say stagger, but he might have given a bit tremble."

"We are coming to the truth now; what did you consider the cause of the trembling, as you call it?" and the innocent young advocate looked round in triumph.

"Weel," replied Drumtochty, making a clean breast of it, "since ye must have it, I heard that he was a very learned man, and it came into my mind that the Hebrew, which, I'm telled, is a very contrary langidge, had gone doon and settled in his legs."

The parish of Netheraird was declared vacant, but it was understood that the beadle of Pittendrieh had not contributed to this decision.

His own parish followed the trial with intense interest, and were much pleased with Andra's appearance.

"Man," said Hillocks, "Andra has more gumption than ye would think, and yon advocat' didn't make much o' him. No, no, Andra wasn't brought up in the Glen for nothin'. Maister MacOmish may have taken his glass atween the Hebrew and the Greek, and it's no very suitable for a minister, but that's another thing from bein' intoxicat'."

"Keep us all! if ye were to put me in the box this minute, I couldn't swear I had ever seen a man intoxicat in my life, except a poor body o' an English bag-man at Muirtown Station. I doubt he had been meddlin' wi' spirits, and they were wheelin' him to his carriage in a luggage barrow. It was a fearsome sight, and enough to keep any man from speakin' about intoxicat in yon loose way."

Archie Moncur fought the drinking customs of the Glen night and day with moderate success, and one winter's night he gave me a study in his subject which, after the lapse of years, I still think admirable for its reserve power and Dantesque conclusion.

"They all begin in a small way," explained Archie, almost hidden in the depths of my reading chair, and emphasizing his points with a gentle motion of his right hand; "nothin' to mention, just a glass an

odd time — a burial or a marriage — and maybe New Year. That's the first stage; they call that moderation. After a while they take a mornin' wi' a friend, and then a glass at the public house in the evenin', and they treat one anither on market days. That's the second stage; that's tastin'. Then they need it reg'lar every day, night an' mornin', and they'll sit on at night till they're turned oot. They'll fight over the Confession noo, and last Sabbath's sermon, in the Kildrummie train, till it's clean ridiculous. That's drammin', and when they've had a year or two at that they have their first spatie (spate is a river flood), and that gives them a bit fright. But off they set again, and then comes another spatie, and the doctor has to bring them round. They drive carefu' for a year or so, but the feein' market puts the finishin' touch. They slip off sudden in the end, and then they just go plunk! Ay," said Archie, in a tone of gentle meditation, looking, as it were, over the edge, "just plunk!"

Nothing ever affected my imagination more powerfully than the swift surprise and gruesome suggestion of that "plunk."

But the literary credit of Drumtochty rested on a broad basis, and no one could live with us without having his speech braced for life. You felt equal to any emergency, and were always able to express your mind with some degree of accuracy. There is, for instance, a type of idler who exasperates one to the point of assault, and whom one hungers to describe after a becoming manner. But English has no bite. He was rare in the cold air of the North, but we had produced one specimen, and it was my luck to be present when he came back from a distant colony, and Jamie Soutar welcomed him in the kirk-yard.

"Weel, Chairlie," and Jamie examined the well-dressed prodigal from top to toe. "this is a proud moment for Drumtochty, and an awfu' relief to know ye're safe. Man, ye haven't wanted meat nor clothes; I take it

real neighborly o' ye to speak at all wi' us old-fashioned folk.

"Ye needn't look sour, nor cock your nose in the air, for you an' me are old friends, and your poor grannie was no more anxious about ye than I was.

"'I'm feared that laddie o' Bell's 'ill kill himself oot in Ameriky,' were my very words to Hillocks here; 'he 'ill be slavin' his flesh off his bones to make a fortune and keep her comfortable.'

"It was a real satisfaction to read your letter from the backwoods — or was 't a public house in New York? my memory's no what it used to be — tellin' how ye were aye thinkin' o' your old granny, and wantin' to come home and be a comfort to her if she would send ye oot twenty pounds.

"The bit that affected me most was the text from the Prodigal Son — it came in so natural. Many a broken heart has that story bound up, as we know well in this Glen; but it's done a heap o' mischief, too — that good word o' the Maister. Half the ne'er-do-weels in the world pay their passage home wi' that parable, and get a brand new outfit for another start in the far country.

"Now, don't turn red, Chairlie, for the neighbors know ye were to work your way home had it no been for your health. But there's a pack o' rascals 'ill sponge on their father as long as he's livin', and they 'ill starve a widowed mither, and they 'ill take a sister's wâges, and if they cannot get any better a worn-oot body o' eighty 'ill serve them.

"Man, Chairlie, if I had my will wi' those creatures I would ship them off to a desert island, wi' one sack o' seed potatoes, and anither o' seed corn, and let them work or die. I know ye're wi' me there, for ye aye had an independent spirit and wasn't feared to bend your back.

"Noo, if I came across one o' these miserable objects in Drumtochty, do ye know the advice I would give him?

"I would tell the daidlin', thowless, feckless, fushionless wratch o' a cratur" — (equivalent in English to "dawdling, thriftless, useless, powerless wretch") — "to watch for the first freshet and drown himself in the Lochty.

"What's he off through the graves for in such a hurry?" and Jamie followed Charlie's retreating figure with a glance of admirable amazement; "they're no very good manners he's learned in Ameriky."

"Thank ye, Jeems, thank ye; we're all obliged to ye," said Drumsheugh. "I was achin' to lay my hands on the fop myself, but my certes, he's had his kail hot this mornin'. Do ye think he 'ill take your advice?"

"No fear o' him; these ne'er-do-weels haven't the spunk; but I'm expectin' he 'ill leave the parish."

Which he did. Had you called him indolent or useless he had smiled; but "daidlin', thowless, feckless, fushionless wratch" drew blood at every stroke, like a Russian knout.

We had tender words, also, that still bring the tears to my eyes, and chief among them was "couthy." What did it mean? It meant a letter to some tired townsman, written in homely Scotch, and bidding him come to get new life from the Drumtochty air, and the grip of an honest hand on the Kildrummie platform whose warmth lasted till you reached the Glen; and another welcome at the garden-gate that mingled with the scent of honeysuckle, and moss-roses, and thyme, and carnations; and the best of everything that could be given you; and motherly nursing in illness, with skilly remedies of the olden time; and wise, cheery talk that spake no ill of man or God; and loud reproaches if you proposed to leave under a month or two; and absolute conditions that you must return; and a load of country dainties for a bachelor's bare commons; and far more, that cannot be put into words, of hospitality, and kindness, and quietness, and restfulness, and loyal friendship of hearts now turned to dust.

But the best of all our words were kept for spiritual things, and the description of a godly man. We did not speak of the "higher life," nor of a "beautiful Christian," for this way of putting it would not have been in keeping with the genius of Drumtochty. Religion there was very lowly and modest — an inward walk with God. No man boasted of himself, none told the secrets of the soul. But the Glen took notice of its saints, and did them silent reverence, which they themselves never knew. Jamie Soutar had a wicked tongue, and, at a time, it played round Archie's temperance schemes, but when that good man's back was turned Jamie was the first to do him justice.

"It would set us better if we did as much good as Archie; he's a right-livin' man an' weel prepared."

Our choicest tribute was paid by general consent to Burnbrae, and it may be partiality, but it sounds to me the deepest in religious speech. Every cottage, strangers must understand, had at least two rooms — the kitchen, where the work was done, that we called the "But," and there all kinds of people came; and the inner chamber which held the household treasures, that we called the "Ben," and there none but a few honored visitors had entrance. So we imagined an outer court of the religious life where most of us made our home, and a secret place where only God's nearest friends could enter, and it was said of Burnbrae, "He's far ben." His neighbors had watched him, for a generation and more, buying and selling, plowing and reaping, going out and in the common ways of a farmer's life, and had not missed the glory of the soul. The cynic of Drumtochty summed up his character: "There's a number o' good folk in the pairish, and one or two o' the ither kind, and the most o' us are half and between," said Jamie Soutar, "but there's one thing ye may be sure o' — Burnbrae is 'far ben.'"

A WISE WOMAN.

OUR SERMON TASTER.



DRUMTOCHTY man, standing six feet three in his boots, sat himself down one day in the study of a West-End minister, and gazed before him with the countenance of a sphinx.

The sight struck awe into the townsman's heart, and the power of speech was paralyzed within him.

"I'm from Drumtochty," began a deep, solemn voice. "Ye 'ill have heard o' Drumtochty, of course. I've joined the police; the pay is no that bad, and the work is nothin' to an able-bodied man."

When these particulars had been digested by the audience:

"It's a crowded place, London, and the folk aye in a commotion, runnin' here and runnin' there, and the most o' them don't know where they're goin'.

"It's officer this and officer that, from mornin' till night. It's pitifu' to see the helplessness o' the bodies in their own town. And they're frivolous," continued the figure, refreshing itself with a reminiscence. "It was this very mornin' that a man asked me how to get to the Strand.

"'Keep on,' I says, 'till ye come to a cross street, and do not gang doon it, and when ye see anither pass it, but whip round the third, and your nose 'ill bring ye to the Strand.'

"He was a shufflin' bit cratur, and he looked up at me. 'Where were you born, officer?' in his clippit English tongue.

"'Drumtochty,' I said; 'an' we have just one man as small as you in the whole Glen.'

"He went away laughin' like to split his sides, an' the fact is there's no one o' them

asks me a question but he laughs. They're a light-headed folk, and no much educated. But we mustn't boast; they haven't had oor advantages."

The minister made a brave effort to assert himself.

"Is there anything I can do?" but the figure simply waved its hand and resumed.

"I'm comin' to that, but I thought ye would be wantin' my opinion o' London.

"Weel, ye see, the first thing I did, of coorse, after settlin' doon, was to go round the kirks and hear what kind o' ministers they have up here. I've been in sixteen kirks the last three months, and I would have been in more had it no been for my hours.

"Ay, ay, I know ye 'ill be wantin' my judgment," interpreting a movement in the chair, "an' ye 'ill have it. Some was poor stuff—plenty o' water and little meal—and some wasn't so bad for England. But ye 'ill be pleased to know," here the figure relaxed and beamed on the anxious minister, "that I'm real satisfied wi' yourself, and I'm thinkin' o' sittin' under ye.

"Man," were Drumtochty's last words, "I wish Elspeth Macfadyen could hear ye, her that tastes the sermons in oor Glen; I believe she would pass ye, an' if ye got a certificate from Elspeth ye would be a proud man."

Drumtochty read widely—Soutar was soaked in Carlyle, and Marget Howe knew her "In Memoriam" by heart—but our intellectual life centered on the weekly sermon. Men thought about Sabbath as they followed the plow in our fresh air, and braced themselves for an effort at the giving out of the text. The hearer had his snuff and selected his attitude, and from that moment to the close he never moved nor took his eyes off the preacher. There was a tradition that one of the Disruption fathers had

preached in the Free Kirk for one hour and fifty minutes on the bulwarks of Zion, and had left the impression that he was only playing round the outskirts of his subject. No preacher with anything to say could complain of Drumtochty, for he got a patient, honest, critical hearing from beginning to end. If a preacher were slightly equipped, the audience may have been trying. Well-meaning evangelists who came with what they called "a simple Gospel address," and were accustomed to have their warmer passages punctuated with rounds of spiritual applause in the shape of smiles and nods, lost heart in face of that judicial front, and afterward described Drumtochty in the religious papers as "dead." It was as well that these good men walked in a vain show, for their hearers were painfully alive.

"Where did yon weakly body come from, Burnbrae? It was light work the day. There was no thought worth mentionin', and anything he had was eked out by repetition. To say nothin' o' childish stories."

"He lives aboot England, I'm told, and does a heap o' good in his own place. He hasn't much in his head, I'll allow that, Netherton; but he's an earnest bit cratur."

"Ou ay, an' full o' self-conceit. Did ye hear how often he said 'I'? I got as far as sixty-three, and then I lost count. But I kept 'dear,' it came to the hundred neat."

"'Weel?' I says to Elspeth Macfadyen. I knew she would have his measure."

"'Gruel, Netherton, just gruel, and enough to sicken ye wi' sugar.'"

It was the birthright of every native of the parish to be a critic, and certain were allowed to be experts in special departments — Lachlan Campbell in doctrine and Jamie Soutar in logic — but as an all-round practitioner Mrs. Macfadyen had a solitary reputation. It rested on a long series of unreversed judgments, with felicitous strokes of description that passed into the literary capital of the Glen. One felt it was genius, and could only note contributing circum-

stances — an eye that took in the preacher from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot; an almost uncanny insight into character; the instinct to seize on every scrap of evidence; a memory that was simply an automatic register; an unfailing sense of fitness; and an absolute impartiality regarding subject.

It goes without saying that Mrs. Macfadyen did not take nervous little notes during the sermon — all writing on Sabbath, in kirk or outside, was strictly forbidden in Drumtochty — or mark her Bible, or practice any other profane device of feeble-minded hearers. It did not matter how elaborate or how incoherent a sermon might be, it could not confuse our critic.

When John Peddie of Muirtown, who always approached two hours, and usually had to leave out the last head, took time, at the Drumtochty Fast, and gave at length his famous discourse on the total depravity of the human race, from the text, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come," it may be admitted that the Glen wavered in its confidence. Human nature has limitations, and failure would have been no discredit to Elspeth.

"They were sayin' at the Presbytery," Burnbrae reported, "that it has more than seventy heads, countin' points, of course, and I can well believe it. No, no, it's no to be expected that Elspeth could give them all after one hearin'."

Jamie Soutar looked in to set his mind at rest, and Elspeth went at once to work.

"Sit doon, Jamie, for it cannot be done in a minute."

It took twenty-three minutes exactly, for Jamie watched the clock.

"That's the last, makin' seventy-four, and ye may depend on every one but that fourth point under the sixth head. Whether it was the 'beginnin' o' faith' or 'the origin' I cannot be sure, for he cleared his throat at the time."

Peter Bruce stood helpless at the Junction

next Friday — Drumtochty was celebrating Elspeth — and the achievement established her for life.

Probationers who preached in the vacancy had heard rumors, and tried to identify their judge, with the disconcerting result that they addressed their floweriest passages to Mistress Stirton, who was the stupidest woman in the Free Kirk, and had once stuck in the “chief end of man.” They never suspected the sony motherly woman, two pews behind Donald Menzies, with her face of demure interest and general air of country simplicity. It was as well for the probationers that they had not caught the glint of those black beady eyes.

“It’s curious,” Mrs. Macfadyen remarked to me one day, “how the pulpit fashions change, just like weemen’s bonnets. Noo, I mind when old Doctor Ferintosh, him that wrote ‘Judas Iscariot the first Residuary,’ would stand two minutes, facin’ the folk, and no sit down till he had his snuff. But these young smarties make out that they see nobody comin’ in, an’ cover their face wi’ one hand so solemn that if ye didn’t catch them peepin’ through their fingers to see what like the kirk is, ye would think they were prayin’.”

“There’s not much escapes you,” I dared to say, and although the excellent woman was not accessible to gross flattery, she seemed pleased.

“I’m thankfu’ that I can see withoot lookin’; an’ there’s the new minister o’ Netheraird, he writes his sermon on one side o’ ten sheets o’ paper. He’s that carried away at the end o’ every page that he doesn’t know what he’s doin’, an’ the sleeve o’ his gown slips the sheet across to the ither side o’ the Bible.

“But Doctor Ferintosh was cleverer. Man, it near beat me to detect him,” and Elspeth paused to enjoy the pulpit ruse. “It came to me sudden one Sacrament Monday, how does he aye turn up twelve texts, neither more nor less, and that set me thinkin’.

Then I noticed that he left the Bible open at the place till anither text was due, and I wondered I’d been so slow. It was this way: he asked the beadle for a glass o’ water in the vestry, and slipped his sermon in atween the leaves in so many bits. I’ve wished for a gallery at a time, but there’s more credit in findin’ oot below — ay, an’ pleasure, too; I never wearied in kirk in my life.”

Mrs. Macfadyen did not appreciate prodigal quotations of Scripture, and had her suspicions of this practice.

“Take the minister o’ Pittendreigh noo; he’s fair stupid wi’ potterin’ in his garden and feedin’ pigs, and hasn’t studied a sermon for thirty year.

“So what does he do, think ye? He beats about for a while on the errors o’ the day, and then he says, ‘That’s what man says, but what says the Apostle Paul? We shall see what the Apostle Paul says.’ He puts on his glasses and turns up the passage, and reads maybe ten verses, and then he’s off on the trot again. When a man has nothin’ to say he’s aye long, and I’ve seen him give half an hour o’ passages and anither half o’ fillin’ in wi’ nothing.”

“‘He’s a Bible preacher at any rate,’ says Burnbrae to me last Fast, for, honest man, he has aye some good word for a body.

“‘It’s one thing,’ I said to him, ‘to feed a calf wi’ milk, and anither to give it the empty bucket to lick.’

“It’s curious, but I’ve noticed that when a Moderate gets lazy he preaches old sermons, but a Free Kirk minister takes to abusin’ his neighbors and readin’ scraps o’ the Bible.

“But Pittendreigh has two sermons at any rate,” and Elspeth tasted the sweets of memory with such keen relish that I begged for a share.

“Weel, ye see he’s terrible proud o’ his finishes, and this is one o’ them:

“‘Heaven, my brethren, will be far grander than the house o’ any earthly poten-

tate, for there ye will no longer eat the flesh o' bulls nor drink the blood o' goats, but we shall suck the juicy pear and scoop the luscious melon. Amen.'

"He has no more sense o' humor than an owl, and I aye hold that a man without humor shouldn't be allowed in a pulpit. I hear that they have no examination in humor at the college; it's an awfu' want, for it would keep oot many a dry-like body.

"But the melon's nothin' to the goat; that beat everything, at the Fast, too. If Jeems was about I daren't mention it; he can't behave himself to this day if he hears it, though ye know he's a quiet man as ever lived.

"It was anither finish, and it ran this way: 'Noo, my friends, I will no be keepin' ye ony longer, and ye 'ill all go home to your own houses and mind your own business. And as soon as ye get home, every man 'ill go to his closet and shut the door, and stand for five minutes, and ask himself this solemn question, 'Am I a goat?' Amen.'

"The amen near upset me myself, and I had to poke Jeems wi' my elbow.

"He said no a word on the way back, but I saw it was burnin' in him, and he went oot sudden after his dinner as if he had been taken unwell.

"I came on him in the cow-house, rollin' in the straw like a bairn, and every oother roll he took he would say, 'Am I a goat?'

"It was no sensible for a man o' his weight, besides being a married man and a kirk member, and I gave him a hearin'.

"He sobered doon, and I never saw him do the like since. But he hasn't forgot, no, no; I've seen a look come over Jeems' face in kirk, and I've been afeared."

When the Free Kirk quarreled in their vacancy over two probationers, Mrs. Macfadyen summed them up with such excellent judgment that they were thrown over and peace restored.

"There's some o' those Muirtown drapers that can deck oot their windows that ye



"I hear they have no examination in humor at the college."

can't pass withoot lookin'; there's bits o' blue and bits o' red, and a ribbon here and a lace yonder.

"It's a bonnie show and dainty, an' no wonder the lassies stan' and stare.

"But go into the shop, and pity me! there's next to nothin'; it's all in the window.

"Noo, that's Maister Popinjay, as neat and trim a little mannie as ever I saw in a black gown. His bit sermon was six poems

— five I had heard afore — four anecdotes — three about himself and one about a lord — two brooklets, one flower garden, and a snowstorm, wi' the text thirteen times and 'beloved' twelve; that was all; a takin' window, and Netherton's lassies couldn't sleep thinkin' o' him.

"There's ither shopmen in Muirtown that fair disgust ye wi' their windows — they're that ill set oot — and inside there's such an amount o' stuff that the man can't get what ye want; he's clean smothered wi' his own goods.

"It's a grand shop for the old folk that have plenty o' time, and can turn over the things by the hour. Ye 'ill no get a young body inside the door.

"That's Maister Auchtermuchty; he has more material than he knows how to handle, and nobody, hearin' him, can make head or tail o' his sermon.

"Ye get a drive at the Covenants one minute and a mouthful o' justification the next. Ye're no sooner wi' the Patriarchs than ye're whipped off to the Apostles.

"It's rich feedin', no doubt, but sorely mixed and no very tasty."

So the old and young compromised and chose Carmichael.

Elsbeth was candid enough on occasion, but she was not indiscreet. She could convey her mind delicately if need be, and was a mistress of subtle suggestion.

When Netherton's nephew preached the missionary sermon — he was a stout young man with a volcanic voice — Mrs. Macfadyen could not shirk her duty, but she gave her judgment with care.

"He's a fine lad, and 'ill be sure to get a kirk; he's been well brought up and comes o' decent folk.

"His doctrine sounds right, and he 'ill no go off the track. Ye can't call him bashful, and he's sure to be heard."

Her audience still waited and not in vain.

"But the Lord has no pleasure in the

legs o' a man," and everyone felt that the last word had been said on Netherton's nephew.

THE COLLAPSE OF MRS. MACFADYEN.



CARMICHAEL used to lament bitterly that he had lost his Gaelic, and labored plans of compensation for our Celts, who were understood to worship in English at an immense reduction of profit. One spring he intercepted a Highland minister, who was return-

ing from his winter's raid on Glasgow with great spoil, and arranged an evening service, which might carry Lachlan Campbell back to the golden days of Auchindarroch. Mr. Dugald Mactavish was himself much impressed with the opportunity of refreshing his exiled brethren, speaking freely on the Saturday of the Lowlands as Babylon, and the duty of gathering the outcasts of Israel into one. He was weaned with difficulty from Gaelic, and only consented to preach in the "other language" on condition that he should not be restricted in time. His soul had been much hampered in West-End churches, where he had to appeal for his new stove under the first head, lest he should go empty away, and it was natural for one escaping from such bondage to put a generous interpretation on Carmichael's concession. So Maister Dugald continued unto the setting of the sun. His discourse was so rich and varied that Peddie of Muirtown on original sin was not to be compared with it in breadth of treatment, and Mrs. Macfadyen confessed frankly that she gave up in despair before the preacher had fairly entered on his second hour. Besides the encounter of the preacher with Mr. Urijah Hopps, which carried the Glen by storm, and

kept the name of Mactavish green with us for a generation.

Rumors of this monumental pulpit effort passed from end to end of the Glen during the week, and Peter himself recognized that it was an occasion at the Junction on Friday.

"Ye may as weel shut off the steam, Jeems," Peter explained to our engine-driver, "an' give them ten minutes. It's been by ordinar' at Drumtochty Free Kirk last Sabbath night, and Drumsheugh 'ill no move till he hears the end on't."

And as soon as the Muirtown train had removed all strangers, that worthy man opened the campaign.

"What kind o' a disturbance is this ye've been carryin' on, Hillocks? It's downright aggravatin' that ye're no content pesterin' oor life oot wi' that English body in the kirk-yard, but ye must needs set him up to argue wi' a strange minister at the Free Kirk. They say that the poor man could hardly get a word in atween you and your lodger. Burnbrae here is threatenin' ye wi' the sheriff, and I don't wonder."

"It's no laughin' matter, I can tell ye, Drumsheugh; I've never been so black affronted all my life. Burnbrae knows as well as ye do that I wasn't to blame."

"Ye 'ill better clear yourself at any rate, Hillocks, for some o' the neighbors insist that it was you, and some that it was your friend, an' there's others declare ye ran in company like two dogs worryin' sheep; it was a bonnie like escapade anyway, and hardly fit for an old kirk elder," — a sally much enjoyed by the audience, who knew that, after Whinnie, Hillocks was the most unaggressive man in Drumtochty.

"Weel, ye see it was this way," began Hillocks, with the air of a man on his trial for fire-raising, "Hopps found oot that a Hielandman was to preach in the Free Kirk, and nothin' would satisfy him but that we must go. I might have suspected it wasn't the sermon the wretch wanted, for

he had the impudence to complain that the Doctor was tedious Sabbath a fortnight when he gave us 'Ruth,' though I never minded 'Ruth' go off so sweet all the times I've heard it.

"If I had imagined what the inquisitive body was after I would have seen my feet in the fire afore they carried me to the Free Kirk that night.

"Says he to me on the road, 'I'm told the minister will be in his national costume.'

"'He 'ill be in his gown and bands,' says I, 'if that's what ye mean;' for the head o' him is full o' maggots, and no man can tell what he will be at next.

"'Maister Soutar said that he would wear his kilt, and that it would be an interesting spectacle.'

"'Jamie's been befoolin' you,' says I. 'Man, there's nobody wears a kit forbye gamekeepers and tourist bodies. Ye 'ill better come away home;' and losh! if I had known what was to happen, I would have taken him off in my arms.

"It's no right to make me responsible, for I tried to wile him away to the back o' the kirk where nobody could see him, but he's that contrary and upsettin', if he didn't go to the very front seat afore the pulpit. 'I want a good position,' says he; 'I'll see everything here;' so I left him and went to Elspeth Macfadyen's seat.

"'He's anxious to hear,' she said, 'an' I'm thinkin' he 'ill get more than he expects. I wish it was well over myself, Hillocks; it 'ill be an awfu' night.'

"These Hielandmen do not put off time wi' the preliminaries, but they were long enough to let anybody see what kind o' man Mactavish was.

"A gruesome fellow, neighbors, wi' his hair hangin' round his face like a warlock, and his eyes blazin' oot o' his head like fire; the sight o' him is sure to sober Hopps, thinks I.

"But no, there's some folk 'ill take no warnin'; there he was, sittin' in front o'

Mactavish with his thumbs in his arm-holes, and a watch-guard spread right across him, and one leg cocked over the other, the very image o' a bantam cock flyin' in the face o' judgment."

Drumtochty had never moved during this history, and now they drew closer round Hillocks, on whom the mantle of speech had for once descended.

"Mactavish looked at the body once, and he looked again just to give him fair notice, and then he broke out in the face o' the whole congregation:

"'There's nothing in all the world so deceptive as sin, for outside it's like a bonnie summer day, and inside it's as black as hell. Now here is this fat little man sittin' before me with his suit o' blue clothes so bonnie and dainty, and a watch guard as thick as my finger on his paunch, smilin' and smirkin', and real well contented with himself; but if he was opened up what a sight it would be for men and angels! Oh, yes, yes, it would be a fearsome sight, and no man here would be able to look.'

"I tell ye, neighbors, ye might have heard a pin fall to the ground, and my heart was thumpin' in my breast; I would not come through the like of yon again for half the plenishin' o' Hillocks."

There was not a sound at the Junction save the steam escaping from the engine, and Hillocks resumed:

"But the worst's comin'. Hopps jumps up and faces Mactavish. I'll no deny there is some spunk in the body.

"'What right have you to speak like that to me? Do you know who I am?'

"He had better been quiet, for he was no match for yon Hielandman.

"Mactavish glowered at him for maybe a minute till the poor cratur fell back into his seat.

"'Man,' says Mactavish, 'I do not know who you are, and I do not know what you are, and I am not asking who you are, and I am not caring though you be MacCallum-

more himsel'. You are just a Parable, oh, yes, just a Parable. But if ye be convicted of secret sin ye may go out, and if there be anybody else whose sins have been laid bare, he may go out too, and if nobody wants to go out, then I will be going on with the sermon, oh, yes, for it will not do to be spending all our time on Parables.'

"As sure as I'm standin' here ye couldn't see Hopps inside his clothes when Mactavish was done wi' him."

When the train started Hillocks received the compliments of the third with much modesty, and added piquant details regarding the utter confusion of our sermon taster.

"'Did ye follow?' I asked o' Elspeth afore I went to put Hopps together.

"'Could I follow a bumble-bee?' was the only word I got from her; I saw she was beaten for once and was real mad."

"Is't true Elspeth scuffled wi' her feet at the last head and made him close?'

"I'll neither deny nor affirm, Drumsheugh; but there's no doubt when the moon began to shine aboot nine, and Mactavish started off on the devil, somebody scraped aside me. It wasn't Jeems; he daren't for his life; and it wasn't me. I'll no say but it might be Elspeth, but she was sore provoked. After holdin' her own twenty years to be mastered by a Hielandman!'

It was simply a duty of friendship to look in and express one's sympathy with Mrs. Macfadyen in this professional disaster. I found her quite willing to go over the circumstances, which were unexampled in her experience, and may indeed be considered a contribution to history.

"I wouldn't have minded," explained Elspeth, settling down to narrative, "how many heads he gave oot, no though he had touched the hundred. I've cause to be gratefu' for a good memory, and I've kept it in fine trim wi' sermons. My way is to place every head at the end o' a shelf, and all the points after it in order, like the plates there," and Mrs. Macfadyen pointed with

honest pride to her wall of crockery, "and when the minister is at an illustration or makin' an appeal, I always run over the rack to see that I've the points in their places. Maister Mactavish could ne'er have got the whiphand o' me with his divisions; he's no fit to hold a candle to John Peddie. No, no, I wasn't feared o' that when I examined yon man givin' oot the Psalm, but I didn't like his eyes.

" 'He's ravelled,' I said to myself, 'without beginnin' or end; we 'ill have a night of it.' And so we had."

I preserved a sympathetic silence till Mrs. Macfadyen felt herself able to proceed.

"It's easy enough, ye see, for an old hand to manage one set o' heads if they come to ten or a hundred, but it's anither business when a man has different sets in one sermon. Noo, hoo many sets do ye think that man had afore he was done?"

It was vain for a mere amateur to cope with the possibilities of Mr. Mactavish.

"Four, as I'm a livin' woman, and that's no all; he didn't finish with one set and begin with the next, but if he didn't mix them all together! Four sets o' heads all in a tangle; noo ye have some kind o' idea o' what I had to face." And Mrs. Macfadyen paused that I might take in the situation.

When I expressed my conviction that even the most experienced hearer was helpless in such circumstances, Elspeth rallied, and gave me to understand that she had saved some fragments from the wreckage.

"I'll just tell ye the whole hypothic, for such a discourse ye may never hear all the days o' your life.

"Ye know those Hielandmen take their texts for the most part from the Old Testament, and this was it, more or less, 'The trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come

from Assyria and the land o' Egypt,' and he began by explainin' that there were two classes in Drumtochty, those who were born and bred in the parish, which were oor-selves, and them that had to stay here owin'



"Like the plates there," said Mrs. Macfadyen.—Page 64.

to the mysterious dispensations o' Providence, which was Lachlan Campbell.

"Noo, this roused my suspicions, for it's against reason for a man to be dividin' into classes till the end o' his sermon. Take my word, it's no chancy when a minister begins at the tail o' his subject; he will wind a queer spool afore he's done.

"Weel, he went up and he went down, and he aye said, 'Oh, yes, yes,' just like the threshin' mill at Drumsheugh, scraikin' and girlin' till it's fairly off, an' by and by oot he comes wi' his heads.

"'There are four trumpets,' says he. 'First, a literal trumpet; second, a historical trumpet; third, a metaphorical trumpet; fourth, a spiritual trumpet.'

"'I've got ye!' I said to myself, and settled doon to hear him on the first head, for fear he might have points; but will ye believe me, he barely mentioned literal till he was off to spiritual, and then back to historical, an' in five minutes he had the whole four trumpets blowin' thegither.

"It was most exasperatin', and I saw Jeems watchin' me — but that's nothin'.

"'There be many trumpets,' says he, 'oh, yes, an' it was a good trumpet Zaccheus heard.' And afore I knew where I was he had started again wi' four new heads, as if he had never said trumpet.

"'A big tree,' he cries, 'an' a little man, oh, yes, an' this is what we will be doin':

"'First, we shall go up the tree wi' Zaccheus.

"'Second, we shall sit in the branches wi' Zaccheus.

"'Third, we shall come down from the tree wi' Zaccheus; and, if time permits:

"'Fourth, we shall be goin' home wi' the publican.'"

It seemed only just to pay a tribute at this point to the wonderful presence of mind Mrs. Macfadyen had shown amid unparalleled difficulties.

"Hoot awa'!" she responded; "the minute any heads came I knew my ground; but the times atween I was fairly lost.

"I'll no deny," and our critic turned aside to general reflections, "that Mactavish said mony bonnie and affectin' things from time to time, like the glimpses o' the hills ye get when the mist rolls away, and he came nearer the heart than the majority o' oor

preachers; but certes, yon confusion is more than us low-country folk could stand.

"Just when he was speakin' aboot Zaccheus as nice as ye please — though whether he was up the tree or doon the tree I couldn't for the life o' me tell — he stops sudden and looks at us over the top o' his spectacles, which is terrible impressive, and near does instead o' speakin'.

"'We will now come to the third head of this discourse.

"'The trumpet shall be blown; for,' says he, in a kind o' whisper, 'there's a hint o' opposition here,' an' I tell ye honestly I lost heart altogether, for here he was back again among the trumpets, and I'll give my oath he never so much as mentioned that head afore.

"It's an awfu' pity that some men don't know when to stop; they might see from the pulpit; if I saw the tears comin' to the women's eyes, or the men glowerin' like wildcats for fear they should break down, I'd say amen as quick as Pittendreigh after his goat.

"What possessed Maister Dugald, as Lachlan called him, I do not know, but aboot half nine — an' he began at six — he set oot upon the trumpets again, an' when he couldn't get a hold o' them, he says:

"'It will be gettin' dark' (the moon was fairly oot), 'an' it is time we were considerin' our last head. We will now study Satan in all his offices and characteristics.'

"I see they've been tellin' ye what happened," and confusion covered Mrs. Macfadyen's ingenuous countenance.

"Well, as sure as death I couldn't help it, to be sittin' on pins for more than two hours tryin' to get a grip o' a man's heads, an' him to play hide-and-seek wi' ye, an' then to begin on Satan at nine o'clock, is more nor flesh and blood could endure.

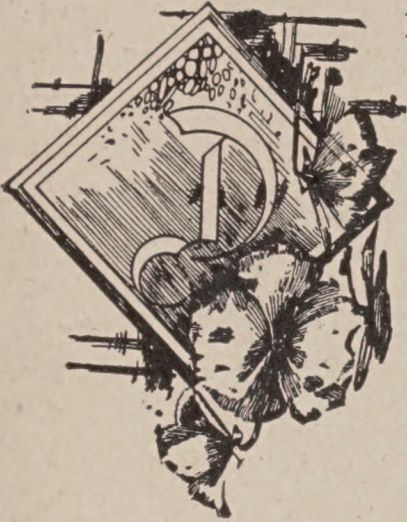
"I acknowledge I scraped, but I hope to goodness I'll never be tempted like yon again. It's a judgment on me for my pride, an' Jeems said that to me, for I boasted I

couldn't be beat, but another hour o' Mac-tavish would have driven me silly."

Then I understood that Mrs. Macfadyen had been humbled in the dust.

A DOCTOR OF THE OLD SCHOOL.

A GENERAL PRACTITIONER.



RUMTOCHTY was accustomed to break every law of health, except wholesome food and fresh air, and through sheer obstinacy of character had reduced the Psalmist's farthest limit to an average life-rate. Our men wore the same

clothes summer and winter, Drumsheugh and one or two of the larger farmers condescending to a topcoat on Sabbath, as a penalty of their position, and without regard to temperature. They wore their blacks at a funeral, refusing to cover them with anything, out of respect to the deceased, and standing longest in the kirk-yard when the north wind was blowing across a hundred miles of snow. If the rain was pouring at the Junction, then Drumtochty stood two minutes longer through sheer native obstinacy, till each man had a cascade from the tail of his coat, and hazarded the suggestion, half-way to Kildrummie, that it had been "a bitter scrowie," a "scrowie" being as far short of a "shower" as a "shower" fell below "wet."

This sustained defiance of the elements provoked occasional judgments in the shape of a "hoast" (cough), and the head of the house was then exhorted by his women folk to "change his feet" if he had happened to walk through a brook on his way home, and

was pestered generally with sanitary precautions. It is right to add that the goodman treated such advice with contempt, regarding it as suitable for the effeminacy of towns, but not seriously intended for Drumtochty. Sandy Stewart "napped" stones on the road in his shirt-sleeves, wet or fair, summer and winter, till he was persuaded to retire from active duty at eighty-five, and he spent ten years more in regretting his hastiness and criticising his successor. The ordinary course of life was to do a full share of work till seventy, and then to look after "odd" jobs well into the eighties, and to "slip awa" within sight of ninety. Persons above ninety were understood to be acquitting themselves with credit, and assumed airs of authority, brushing aside the opinions of seventy as immature, and confirming their conclusions with illustrations drawn from the end of last century.

When Hillocks' brother so far forgot himself as to "slip awa" at sixty, that worthy man was scandalized, and offered labored explanations at the "beerial."

"It's an awfu' business any way ye look at it, and a sore trial to us all. I never heard tell o' such a thing in oor family afore, an' it's no easy accountin' for it.

"The good wife was sayin' he was never the same since a wet night he lost himself on the moor and slept below a bush; but that's neither here nor there. I'm thinkin' he sapped his constitution those two years he was farm manager aboot England. That was thirty years ago, but ye're never the same after those foreign climates."

Drumtochty listened patiently to Hillocks' apologia, but was not satisfied.

"It's clean nonsense aboot the moor. Losh keep 's! we've all slept oot and never been a hair the worse. I admit that England might have done the job; it's no' wise stravagin' yon way from place to place, but Drums never complained to me as if he had been nipped in the South."

The parish, in fact, lost confidence in Drums after his wayward experiment with a potato-digging machine, which turned out a lamentable failure, and his premature departure confirmed our vague impression of his character.

"He's awa' noo," Drumsheugh summed up, after opinion had time to form; "an' there were worse folk than Drums, but there's no doubt he was a wee bit flighty."

When illness had the audacity to attack a Drumtochty man, it was described as a "whup," and was treated with a fine negligence. Hillocks was sitting in the post-office one afternoon when I looked in for my letters, and the right side of his face was blazing red. His subject of discourse was the prospects of the potato "breer," (the first shoots that come through the ground), but he casually explained that he was waiting for medical advice.

"The good wife is keepin' up a ding-dong from mornin' till night aboot my face, and I'm fair deafened, so I'm watchin' for MacLure to get a bottle as he comes past; yon's him noo."

The doctor made his diagnosis from horse-back on sight, and stated the result with that admirable clearness which endeared him to Drumtochty.

"Confound ye, Hillocks, what are ye plashin' aboot here for in the wet wi' a face like a boiled beet? Do ye not know that ye've a touch o' erysipelas and ought to be in the house? Go home wi' ye afore I leave the bit, and send a lad for some medicine. Ye stupid idiot, are ye anxious to follow Drums afore your time?" And the medical attend-

ant of Drumtochty continued his invective till Hillocks started, and still pursued his retreating figure with medical directions of a simple and practical character.

"I'm watchin', an' pity ye if ye put off time. Keep your bed the mornin', and don't show your face in the fields till I see ye. I'll give ye a call on Monday — such an old fool — but there's no one o' them to mend anither in the whole parish."

Hillocks' wife informed the kirk-yard that the doctor "gave the good man an awfu' clearin'," and that Hillocks "was keepin' the house," which meant that the patient had tea breakfast, and at that time was wandering about the farm buildings in an easy undress with his head in a plaid.

It was impossible for a doctor to earn even the most modest competence from a people of such scandalous health, and so MacLure had annexed neighboring parishes. His house — little more than a cottage — stood on the roadside among the pines toward the head of our Glen, and from this base of operations he dominated the wild glen that broke the wall of the Grampians above Drumtochty — where the snowdrifts were twelve feet deep in winter, and the only way of passage at times was the channel of the river — and the moorland district westwards till he came to the Dunleith sphere of influence. Drumtochty in its length, which was eight miles, and its breadth, which was four, lay in his hand; besides a glen behind, unknown to the world, which in the night time he visited at the risk of life, for the way thereto was across the big moor with its peat holes and treacherous bogs. And he held the land southwards toward Muirtown so far as Geordie, the Drumtochty post, traveled every day, and could carry word that the doctor was wanted. He did his best for the need of every man, woman and child in this wild, straggling district, year in, year out, in the snow and in the heat, in the dark and in the light, without rest and without holiday for forty years.

One horse could not do the work of this man, but we liked best to see him on his old white mare, who died the week after her master, and the passing of the two did our hearts good. It was not that he rode beautifully, for he broke every canon of art, flying with his arms, stooping till he seemed to be speaking into Jess' ears, and rising in the

doctor, and, without being conscious of it, wished him God speed.

Before and behind his saddle were strapped the instruments and medicines the doctor might want, for he never knew what was before him. There were no specialists in Drumtochty, so this man had to do everything as best he could, and as quickly. He



The doctor made his diagnosis from horseback.—See page 68.

saddle beyond all necessity. But he could ride faster, stay longer in the saddle, and had a firmer grip with his knees than any one I ever met, and it was all for mercy's sake.

When the reapers in harvest time saw a figure whirling past in a cloud of dust, or the family at the foot of Glen Urtach, gathered round the fire on a winter's night, heard the rattle of a horse's hoofs on the road, or the shepherds, out after the sheep, traced a black speck moving across the snow to the upper glen, they knew it was the

was chest doctor and doctor for every other organ as well; he was accoucheur and surgeon; he was oculist and aurist; he was dentist and chloroformist, besides being chemist and druggist. It was often told how he was far up Glen Urtach when the feeders of the threshing mill caught young Burnbrae, and how he only stopped to change horses at his house, and galloped all the way to Burnbrae, flung himself off his horse, and amputated the arm and saved the lad's life.

"You would have thought that every minute was an hour," said Jamie Soutar,

who had been at the threshing, "an' I'll never forget the poor lad lyin' as white as death on the floor o' the loft, wi' his head on a sheaf, an' Burnbrae holdin' the bandage tight an' prayin' the while, and the mither weepin' in the corner.

"'Will he never come?' she cries, an' I heard the sound o' the horse's feet on the road a mile awa' in the frosty air.

"'The Lord be praised!' said Burnbrae, and I slipped doon the ladder as the doctor came gallopin' into the close, the foam flyin' from his horse's mouth.

"'Where is he?' was all that passed his lips, an' in five minutes he had him on the feedin' board and was at his work—such work, neighbors!—but he did it well. An' one thing I thought real kind o' him: he first sent off the laddie's mither to get a bed ready.

"'Noo, that's finished, and his constitution 'ill do the rest;' and he carried the lad doon the ladder in his arms like a bairn, and laid him in his bed, and waits aside him till he was sleepin', and then says he: 'Burnbrae, you're a smart lad never to say, "Collie, will ye lick?" for I haven't tasted meat for sixteen hours.'

"It was mighty to see him come into the yard that day, neighbors; the very look o' him was victory."

Jamie's cynicism slipped off in the enthusiasm of this reminiscence, and he expressed the feeling of Drumtochty. No one sent for MacLure save in great straits, and the sight of him put courage in sinking hearts. But this was not by the grace of his appearance or the advantage of a good bedside manner. A tall, gaunt, loosely-made man, without an ounce of superfluous flesh on his body, his face burned a dark brick color by constant exposure to the weather, red hair and beard turning gray, honest blue eyes that looked you ever in the face, huge hands with wrist bones like the shank of a ham, and a voice that hurled his salutations across two fields, he

suggested the moor rather than the drawing-room. But what a clever hand it was in an operation, as delicate as a woman's! and what a kindly voice it was in the humble room where the shepherd's wife was weeping by her man's bedside. He was "ill put together" to begin with, but many of his physical defects were the penalties of his work, and endeared him to the Glen. That ugly scar that cut into his right eyebrow and gave him such a sinister expression, was got one night Jess slipped on the ice and laid him insensible eight miles from home. His limp marked the big snowstorm in the fifties, when his horse missed the road in Glen Urtach, and they rolled together in a drift. MacLure escaped with a broken leg and three ribs, but he never walked like other men again. He could not swing himself into the saddle without making two attempts and holding Jess' mane. Neither can you "warstle" through the peat bogs and snowdrifts for forty winters without a touch of rheumatism. But they were honorable scars, and for such risks of life men get the Victoria Cross in other fields. MacLure got nothing but the secret affection of the Glen, which knew that none had ever done one-tenth as much for it as this ungainly, twisted, battered figure, and I have seen a Drumtochty face soften at the sight of MacLure limping to his horse.

Mr. Hopps earned the ill-will of the Glen forever by criticising the doctor's dress, but indeed it would have filled any townsman with amazement. Black he wore once a year, on Sacrament Sunday, and, if possible, at a funeral; topcoat or waterproof never. His jacket and waistcoat were rough homespun of Glen Urtach wool, which threw off the wet like a duck's back, and below he was clad in shepherd's tartan, finished off with unpolished riding boots. His shirt was gray flannel, and he was uncertain about a collar, but certain as to a tie, which he never had, his beard doing instead, and his hat was soft felt of four colors and seven dif-

ferent shapes. His point of distinction in dress was the trousers, and they were the subject of unending speculation.

"Some insist that he's worn that identical pair the last twenty year, and I mind myself him gettin' a tear behind, when he was crossin' oor palin', and the mend's still visible.

"Others declare that he's got a web o' cloth, and has a new pair made in Muirtown, once in two years maybe, and keeps them in the garden till the new look wears off.

"For my own part," Soutar used to declare, "I cannot make up my mind, but there's one thing sure — the Glen would not like to see him withoot them; it would be a shock to confidence. There's not much o' the check left, but ye can aye tell it, and when ye see those breeches comin' in ye know that if human power can save your bairn's life, it 'ill be done."

The confidence of the Glen — and tributary states — was unbounded, and rested partly on long experience of the doctor's resources, and partly on his hereditary connection.

"His father was here afore him," Mrs. Macfadyen used to explain; "atween them they've had the countyside for weel on to a century; if MacLure doesn't understand oor constitution, who does, I would like to ask?"

For Drumtochty had its own constitution, and a special throat disease, as became a parish which was quite self-contained between the woods and the hills, and not dependent on the lowlands either for its diseases or its doctors.

"He's a skillful man, Doctor MacLure," continued my friend, Mrs. Macfadyen, whose judgment on sermons or anything else was seldom at fault; "an' a kind-hearted, though o' course he has his faults like us all, an' he doesn't trouble the kirk often.

"He aye can tell what's wrong wi' a body, an' mostly he can put ye right, an' there's no new-fangled ways wi' him; a blister for

the ootside an' Epsom salts for the inside does his work, an' they say there's not an herb on the hills he doesn't know.

"If we're to die, we're to die; an' if we're to live we're to live," concluded Elspeth; "but I'll say this for the doctor, that whether ye're to live or die, he can aye keep up a sharp moisture on the skin.

"But he's no very civil if ye bring him when there's nothin' wrong," and Mrs. Macfadyen's face reflected another of Mr. Hopps' misadventures of which Hillocks held the copyright.

"Hopps' laddie ate gooseberries till they had to sit up all night wi' him, and nothin' would do but they must have the doctor, an' he writes 'immediately' on a slip o' paper.

"Weel, MacLure had been away all night wi' a shepherd's wife Dunleith way, and he comes here withoot drawin' bridle, mud up to the eyes.

"What's to do here, Hillocks?" he cries, "it's no an accident, is't?" And when he got off his horse he could hardly stand wi' stiffness and tire.

"It's none o' us, doctor, it's Hopps' laddie; he's been eatin' too many berries."

"If he didn't turn on me like a tiger.

"Do ye mean to say —"

"Weesht, weesht!" an' I tried to quiet him, for Hopps was comin' oot.

"Well, doctor," begins he, as brisk as a magpie, "you're here at last; there's no hurry with you Scotchmen. My boy has been sick all night, and I've never had one wink of sleep. You might have come a little quicker, that's all I've got to say."

"We've more to do in Drumtochty than attend to every bairn that has a sore stomach," and I saw MacLure was roused.

"I'm astonished to hear you speak. Our doctor at home always says to Mrs. 'Opps, "Look on me as a family friend, Mrs. 'Opps, and send for me, though it be only a headache."

"He'd be more sparin' o' his offers if he

had four and twenty mile to look after. There's nothin' wrong wi' your laddie but greed. Give him a good dose o' castor oil, and stop his meat for a day, an' he 'ill be all right the morn.'

"'He 'ill not take castor oil, doctor. We have given up those barbarous medicines.'

"'What kind o' medicines have ye, noo, in the South?'

"'Well, you see, Dr. MacLure, we're homeopaths, and I've my little chest here;' and out Hopps comes wi' his little box.

"'Let's see it;' and MacLure sits down and takes out the bit bottles, and he reads the names wi' a laugh every time.

"'Belladonna; did ye ever hear the like? Aconite; it beats all. Nux Vomica. What next? Well, my mannie,' he says to Hopps, 'it's a fine muddle, and ye 'ill better go on wi' the Nux till it's done, and give him any other o' the sweeties he fancies.

"'Noo, Hillocks, I must be off to see Drumsheugh's manager, for he's doon wi' the fever, an' it's to be a tough fight. I haven't time to wait for dinner; give me some cheese and cake in my hand, and Jess 'ill take a pail o' meal and water.

"'Fee? I'm no wantin' your fees, man; wi' that boxy ye don't need a doctor; no, no, give it to some poor body, Maister Hopps;' an' he was down the road as hard as he could lick."

His fees were pretty much what the folk chose to give him, and he collected them once a year at Kildrummie Fair.

"Weel, doctor, what am I owin' ye for the wife and bairn? Ye 'ill need three notes for that night ye stayed in the house, and all the visits."

"Nonsense!" MacLure would answer, "prices are low, I'm hearin'; give us thirty shillings."

"No, I'll not, or the wife 'ill take my ears off;" and it was settled for two pounds.

Lord Kilspindie gave him a free house and fields, and one way or other, Drumsheugh

told me, the doctor might get in about £150 a year, out of which he had to pay his old housekeeper's wages and a boy's, and keep two horses, besides instruments and books, which he bought through a friend in Edinburgh with much judgment.

There was only one man who ever complained of the doctor's charges, and that was the new farmer of Milton, who was so good that he was above both churches, and held a meeting in his barn. (It was Milton the Glen supposed at first to be a Mormon, but I can't go into that now.) He offered MacLure a pound less than he asked, and two tracts, whereupon MacLure expressed his opinion of Milton, both from a theological and social standpoint, with such vigor and frankness that an attentive audience of Drumtochty men could hardly contain themselves.

Jamie Soutar was selling his pig at the time, and missed the meeting, but he hastened to condole with Milton, who was complaining everywhere of the doctor's language.

"Ye did right to resist him; it 'ill maybe rouse the Glen to make a stand; he fair holds them in bondage.

"Thirty shillings for twelve visits, and him no more than seven miles away, an' I'm told there weren't more than four at night.

"Ye 'ill have the sympathy o' the Glen, for everybody knows ye're as free wi' your silver as your tracts.

"Was it 'Beware o' Good Works' ye offered him? Man, ye chose it weel, for he's been collectin' so many these forty years, I'm feared for him.

"I've often thought our doctor's little better than the Good Samaritan, an' the Pharisees didn't think much o' his chance either in this world or that which is to come."



THROUGH THE FLOOD.



DOCTOR MAC LURE

did not lead a solemn procession from the sick bed to the dining-room and give his opinion from the hearth-rug with an air of wisdom bordering on the supernatural. He was accustomed to deliver himself in the yard,

and to conclude his directions with one foot in the stirrup; but when he left the room where the life of Annie Mitchell was ebbing slowly away, our doctor said not one word, and at the sight of his face her husband's heart was troubled.

He was a dull man, Tammas, who could not read the meaning of a sign, and labored under a perpetual disability of speech; but love was eyes to him that day, and a mouth.

"Is't as bad as you're lookin', doctor? tell's the truth; will Annie no come through?" and Tammas looked MacLure straight in the face, who never flinched his duty or said smooth things.

"I would give anything to say Annie has a chance, but I daren't; I doubt ye're goin' to lose her, Tammas."

MacLure was in the saddle, and, as he gave his judgment, he laid his hand on Tammas' shoulder with one of the rare caresses that pass between men.

"It's a sore business, but ye 'ill play the man, and no vex Annie; she 'ill do her best, I'll warrant."

"An' I'll do mine," and Tammas gave MacLure's hand a grip that would have crushed the bones of a weakling. Drumtochty felt in such moments the brotherliness of this rough-looking man, and loved him.

Tammas hid his face in Jess' mane, who looked round with sorrow in her beautiful

eyes, for she had seen many tragedies, and in this silent sympathy the stricken man drank his cup, drop by drop.

"I wasn't prepared for this, for I aye thought she would live the longest. . . . She's younger than me by ten years, and never was ill. . . . We've been married twelve year last Martinmas, but it's just like a year the day. . . . I was never worthy o' her, the bonniest, neatest, kindest lass in the Glen. . . . I never could make out how she ever looked at me, that hasn't had one word to say about her till it's too late. . . . She didn't cast up to me that I wasn't worthy o' her, not her, but aye she said, 'Ye're my own good man, and none could be kinder to me.' . . . An' I was minded to be kind, but I see now many little things I might have done for her, and now the time is bye. . . . Nobody knows how patient she was wi' me, and aye made the best o' me, and never put me to shame afore the folk. . . . An' we never had one cross word, no one in twelve year. . . . We were more nor man and wife. we were sweethearts all the time. . . . Oh, my bonnie lass, what 'ill the bairnies an' me do without ye, Annie!"

The winter night was falling fast, the snow lay deep upon the ground, and the merciless north wind moaned through the close as Tammas wrestled with his sorrow dry-eyed, for tears were denied Drumtochty men. Neither the doctor nor Jess moved hand or foot, but their hearts were with their fellow-creature, and at length the doctor made a sign to Marget Howe, who had come out in search of Tammas, and now stood by his side.

"Do not mourn to the breakin' o' your heart, Tammas," she said, "as if Annie an' you had never loved. Neither death nor time can part them that love; there's nothin' in the world as strong as love. If Annie goes from the sight o' your eyes she 'ill come the nearer to your heart. She wants to see ye, and to hear ye say that ye 'ill

never forget her night nor day till ye meet in the land where there's no partin'. Oh, I know what I'm sayin', for it's five years noo since George went away, an' he's more wi' me noo than when he was in Edinboro' and I was in Drumtochty."

"Thank ye kindly, Marget; those are good words and true, an' ye have the right to say them; but I cannot do withoot seein' Annie comin' to meet me in the gloamin', an' hearin' her call me by my name, an' I'll no can tell her that I love her when there's no Annie in the house.

"Can nothin' be done, doctor? Ye saved Flora Cammil and young Burnbrae, and yon shepherd's wife Dunleith way, an' we were all so proud o' ye, an' pleased to think that ye had kept death from anither home. Can ye no think o' somethin' to help Annie, and give her back to her man and bairnies?" and Tammas searched the doctor's face in the cold, weird light.

"There's no power in heaven or earth like love," Marget said to me afterwards; "it makes the weak strong and the dumb to speak. Our hearts were as water afore Tammas' words, an' I saw the doctor shake in his saddle. I never knew till that minute how he had a share in everybody's grief, an' carried the heaviest weight o' all the Glen. I pitied him, wi' Tammas lookin' at him so wistfully, as if he had the keys o' life an' death in his hands. But he was honest, and wouldn't hold out a false hope to deceive a sore heart or win escape for himself."

"Ye needn't plead wi' me, Tammas, to do the best I can for your wife. Man, I knew her long afore ye ever loved her; I brought her into the world, and I saw her through the fever when she was a wee bit lassie; I closed her mother's eyes, and it was me had to tell her she was an orphan, an' no man was better pleased when she got a good husband, an' I helped her wi' her four bairns. I've neither wife nor bairns o' my own, an' I count all the folk o' the Glen my family. Do ye think I wouldn't save

Annie if I could? If there was a man in Muirtown that could do more for her, I'd have him this very night, but all the doctors in Perthshire are helpless for this trouble.

"Tammas, my poor fellow, if it could avail I tell ye I would lay down this old, worn-out body o' mine just to see ye both sittin' at the fireside, and the bairns round ye, comfortable and cozy again; but it's no to be, Tammas, it's no to be."

"When I looked at the doctor's face," Marget said, "I thought him the winsomest man I ever saw. He was transfigured that night, for I'm judgin' there's no transfiguration but love."

"It's God's will, and must be borne, but it's a sore will for me, an' I'm not ungrateful to you, doctor, for all ye've done, and what ye said the night," and Tammas went back to sit with Annie for the last time.

Jess picked her way through the deep snow to the main road with a skill that came of long experience, and the doctor held converse with her according to his wont.

"Eh, Jess woman, yon was the hardest work I have to face, and I would rather have taken my chance o' anither roll in a Glen Urtach drift than tell Tammas Mitchell his wife was dyin'.

"I said she couldn't be cured, and it was true, for there's just one man in the land fit for it, and they might as well try to get the moon out o' heaven. So I said nothin' to vex Tammas' heart, for it's heavy enough withoot regrets.

"But it's hard, Jess, that money will buy life after all, an' if Annie was a duchess her man wouldn't lose her; but bein' only a poor cotter's wife, she must die afore the week's oot.

"If we had him the morn there's little doubt she would be saved, for he hasn't lost more than five per cent. o' his cases, and they 'ill be poor town's cratur, not strappin' women like Annie.

"It's out o' the question, Jess, so hurry

up, lass, for we've had a heavy day. But it would be the grandest thing that was ever done in the Glen in our time, if it could be managed by hook or crook.

"We 'ill go and see Drumsheugh, Jess; he's anither man since Geordie Howe's death, and he was aye kinder than folk knew." And the doctor passed at a gallop through the village, whose lights shone across the white frost-bound road.

"Come in, doctor; I heard ye on the road; ye 'ill have been at Tammas Mitchell's; how's the wife? I doubt she's very ill."

"Annie's dyin', Drumsheugh, an' Tammas is like to break his heart."

"That's no cheerin', doctor, not cheerin' at all; for I don't know any man in Drumtochty so bound up in his wife as Tammas, and there's no a bonnier woman o' her age crosses our kirk door than Annie, nor a cleverer at her work. Man, ye 'ill need to put your brains in a steep. Is she clean beyond ye?"

"Beyond me and every other in the land but one, and it would cost a hundred guineas to bring him to Drumtochty."

"Certes, he's no bashful; it's a heavy charge for a short day's work; but hundred or no hundred, we 'ill have him, an' no let Annie go, and her no half her years."

"Are ye meanin' it, Drumsheugh?" and MacLure turned white below the tan.

"William MacLure," said Drumsheugh, in one of the few confidences that ever broke the Drumtochty reserve, "I'm a lonely man, wi' nobody o' my own blood to care for me livin', or to lift me into my coffin when I'm dead.

"I fight away at Muirtown market for an extra pound on a beast, or a shillin' on the quarter o' barley, an' what's the good o' it? Burnbrae goes off to get a gown for his wife or a book for his college laddie, an' Lachlan Campbell 'ill no leave the place noo without a ribbon for Flora.

"Every man in the Kildrummie train has some bit o' fairin' in his pouch for the folk

at home that he's bought wi' the silver he won.

"But there's nobody to be lookin' oot for me, an' comin' doon the road to meet me, an' jokin' wi' me aboot their fairin', or feelin' my pockets. Ou ay, I've seen it all at other houses, though they tried to hide it from me for fear I would laugh at them. Me laugh, wi' my cold, empty home!"

"Ye're the only man knows, Weelum, that I once loved the noblest woman in the Glen or anywhere, an' I love her still, but wi' anither love noo.

"She had given her heart to anither, or I've thought I might have won her, though no man be worthy o' such a gift. My heart turned to bitterness, but that passed away beside the brier bush where George Hoo lay yon sad summer time. Some day I'll tell ye my story, Weelum, for you an' me are old friends, and will be till we die."

MacLure felt beneath the table for Drumsheugh's hand, but neither man looked at the other.

"Weel, all we can do now, Weelum, if we haven't much brightness in oor own homes, is to keep the light from goin' oot in anither house. Write the telegram, man, and Sandy 'ill send it off from Kildrummie this very night, and ye 'ill have your man the morn."

"Ye're the man I counted ye, Drumsheugh, but ye 'ill grant me one favor. Ye 'ill let me pay the half, bit by bit — I know ye're willin' to do it all — but I haven't many pleasures, an' I would like to have my own share in savin' Annie's life."

Next morning a figure received Sir George on the Kildrummie platform, whom that famous surgeon took for a gillie (hunter's servant), but who introduced himself as "MacLure of Drumtochty." It seemed as if the East had come to meet the West when these two stood together, the one in traveling furs, handsome and distinguished, with his cultured face and carriage of authority, a characteristic type of his profession; and the other more marvelously dressed than ever,

for Drumsheugh's topcoat had been forced upon him for the occasion, his face and neck one redness with the bitter cold; rough and ungainly, yet not without some signs of power in his eye and voice, the most heroic type of his noble profession. MacLure compassed the precious arrival with observances till he was securely seated in Drumsheugh's dog-cart—a vehicle that lent itself to history—with two full-sized plaids added to his equipment—and MacLure wrapped another plaid round a leather case, which was placed below the seat with such reverence as might be given to the Queen's regalia. As soon as they were in the fir woods MacLure explained that it would be an eventful journey.

“It's all right in here, for the wind doesn't get at the snow, but the drifts are deep in the Glen, and there 'ill be some engineerin' afore we get to our destination.”

Four times they left the road and took their way over fields, twice they forced a passage through a break in a dyke, thrice they used gaps in the paling which MacLure had made on his downward journey.

“I selected the road this mornin', an' I know the depth to an inch; we 'ill get through this steadin' here to the main road, but our worst job 'ill be crossin' the Tochtly.

“Ye see the bridge has been shakin' wi' this winter's flood, and we daren't venture on it, so we have to ford, and the snow's been meltin' up Urtach way. There's no doubt the water's badly swollen, an' it's threatenin' to rise, but we 'ill win through wi' a struggle.

“It might be safer to lift the instruments oot o' reach o' the water; would ye mind holdin' them on your knee till we are over, an' keep firm in your seat in case we come on a stone in the bed o' the river.”

By this time they had come to the edge, and it was not a cheering sight. The Tochtly had spread out over the meadows, and while they waited they could see it cover another two inches on the trunk of a tree. There are

summer floods, when the water is brown and flecked with foam, but this was a winter flood, which is black and sullen, and runs in the center with a strong, fierce, silent current. Upon the opposite side Hillocks stood to give directions by word and hand, as the ford was on his land, and none knew the Tochtly better in all its ways.

They passed through the shallow water without mishap, save when the wheel struck a hidden stone or fell suddenly into a rut; but when they neared the body of the river MacLure halted, to give Jess a minute's breathing.

“It 'ill take ye all your time, lass, an' I would rather be on your back; but ye never failed me yet, and a woman's life is hangin' on the crossin'.”

With the first plunge into the bed of the stream the water rose to the axles, and then it crept up to the shafts, so that the surgeon could feel it lapping in about his feet, while the dog-cart began to quiver, and it seemed as if it were to be carried away. Sir George was as brave as most men, but he had never forded a Highland river in flood, and the mass of black water racing past beneath, before, behind him, affected his imagination and shook his nerves. He rose from his seat and ordered MacLure to turn back, declaring that he would be condemned utterly and eternally if he allowed himself to be drowned for any person.

“Sit down!” thundered MacLure; “condemned ye will be sooner or later if ye shirk your duty, but through the water ye go the day.”

Both men spoke much more strongly and shortly, but this is what they intended to say, and it was MacLure that prevailed.

Jess trailed her feet along the ground with cunning art, and held her shoulder against the stream; MacLure leaned forward in his seat, a rein in each hand, and his eyes fixed on Hillocks, who was now standing up to the waist in the water, shouting directions and cheering on horse and driver.

"Keep to the right, doctor; there's a hole yonder. Keep oot for any sake. That's it; ye're doin' fine. Steady, man, steady! Ye're at the deepest; sit heavy on your seats. Up the channel noo, an' ye 'ill be oot o' the swire. Well done, Jess! Well done, old mare! Make straight for me, doctor, an' I'll show ye the road oot. My word, ye've done your best, both o' ye, this mornin'!" cried Hillocks, splashing up to the dog-cart, now in the shallows.

"Man, it was touch and go for a minute in the middle; a Hieland ford is a hazardous road in the snow time, but ye're safe noo.

"Good luck to ye up at Westerton, sir; none but a right-minded man would have risked the Tochtly in flood. Ye're bound to succeed after such a grand beginnin';" for it had spread already that a famous surgeon had come to do his best for Annie, Tammas Mitchell's wife.

Two hours later MacLure came out from Annie's room and laid hold of Tammas, a heap of speechless misery by the kitchen fire, and carried him off to the barn, and spread some corn on the threshing floor and thrust a flail into his hands.

"Noo, we've to begin, an' we 'ill no be done for an hour, and ye've to lay on without stoppin' till I come for ye, an' I'll shut the door to hold in the noise; an' keep your dog beside ye, for there mustn't be a cheep about the house for Annie's sake."

"I'll do onythin' ye want me, but if — if —"

"I'll come for ye, Tammas, if there be danger; but what are ye feared for, wi' the Queen's own surgeon here?"

Fifty minutes did the flail rise and fall, save twice, when Tammas crept to the door and listened, the dog lifting his head and whining.

It seemed twelve hours instead of one when the door swung back, and MacLure

filled the doorway, preceded by a great burst of light, for the sun had arisen on the snow.

His face was as tidings of great joy, and Elspeth told me that there was nothing like it to be seen that afternoon for glory, save the sun itself in the heavens.

"I never saw the equal o' it, Tammas, an' I'll never see the like again; it's all over,



Jess held her shoulder against the stream.—See page 76.

man, without a hitch from beginnin' to end, and she's fallin' asleep as fine as ye like."

"Does he think Annie . . . 'ill live?"

"Of course he does, and be about the house inside a month; that's the good o' bein' clean-blooded, weel-livin' —"

"Preserve ye, man! what's wrong wi' ye? It's a mercy I kept ye, or we would have had anither job for Sir George.

"Ye're all right noo; sit doon on the straw. I'll come back in a while, an' ye 'ill see Annie just for a minute, but ye mustn't say a word."

Marget took him in and let him kneel by Annie's bedside.

He said nothing then or afterwards, for speech came only once in his lifetime to

Tammas, but Annie whispered, "My own dear man."

When the doctor placed the precious bag beside Sir George in our solitary first next morning, he laid a cheque beside it and was about to leave.

"No, no," said the great man. "Mrs. Macfadyen and I were on the gossip last night, and I know the whole story about you and your friend. You have some right to call me a coward, but I'll never let you count me a mean, miserly rascal," and the cheque with Drumsheugh's painful writing fell in fifty pieces on the floor.

As the train began to move, a voice from the first called so that all in the station heard:

"Give's another shake of your hand, MacLure; I'm proud to have met you; you are an honor to our profession. Mind the anti-septic dressings."

It was market day, but only Jamie Soutar and Hillocks had ventured down.

"Did ye hear yon, Hillocks? How do ye feel? I'll no deny I'm lifted."

Half way to the Junction Hillocks had recovered, and began to grasp the situation.

"Tell's what he said. I would like to have it exact for Drumsheugh."

"Them's the eedential words, an' they're true; there's no a man in Drumtochty doesn't know that except one."

"And who's that, Jamie?"

"It's Weelum MacLure himself. Man, I've often rebelled that he should fight awa' for us all, and maybe die afore he knew that he had gathered more love than any man in the Glen.

"'I'm glad to have met ye,' says Sir George, an' him the greatest doctor in the land. 'You're an honor to oor profession.'

"Hillocks, I wouldn't have missed it for twenty notes!" said James Soutar, cynic-in-ordinary to the parish of Drumtochty.



A FIGHT WITH DEATH.



W H E N Drumsheugh's farm manager was brought to the gates of death by fever, caught, as was supposed, on an adventurous visit to Glasgow, the London doctor at Lord Kilspindie's shooting lodge looked in on his way from the moor and declared it impossible for Saunders to live through the night.

"I give him six hours more or less; it is only a question of time," said the oracle, buttoning his gloves and getting into the brake; "tell your parish doctor that I was sorry not to have met him."

Bell heard this verdict from behind the door, and gave way utterly, but Drumsheugh declined to accept it as final, and devoted himself to consolation.

"Don't cry like that, Bell wumman, so long as Saunders is still livin'; I'll never give up hope, for my part, till oor own man says the word.

"All the doctors in the land do not know as much about us as Weelum MacLure, an' he's ill to beat when he's tryin' to save a man's life."

MacLure, on his coming, would say, nothing, either weal or woe, till he had examined Saunders. Suddenly his face turned into iron before their eyes, and he looked like one encountering a merciless foe. For there was a feud between MacLure and a certain mighty power which had lasted for forty years in Drumtochty.

"The London doctor said that Saunders would slip awa' afore mornin', did he? Weel, he's an authority on fevers an' such like diseases, an' ought to know.

"It's maybe presumptuous o' me to differ from him, and it wouldn't be very respectful o' Saunders to live after this opinion.

But Saunders was aye contrary an' ill to drive, an' he's as like as no to go his own gait.

"I'm no meanin' to reflect on so clever a man, but he didn't understand the situation. He can read fevers like a book, but he never came across such a thing as a Drumtochty constitution all his days.

"Ye see, when onybody gets as low as poor Saunders here, it's just a hand-to-hand wrastle atween the fever an' his constitution, an' of course, if he had been a sickly, stunted, pithless effigy o' a cratur, fed on tea an' made dishes an' poisoned wi' bad air, Saunders would have no chance; he was bound to go oot like the snuff o' a candle.

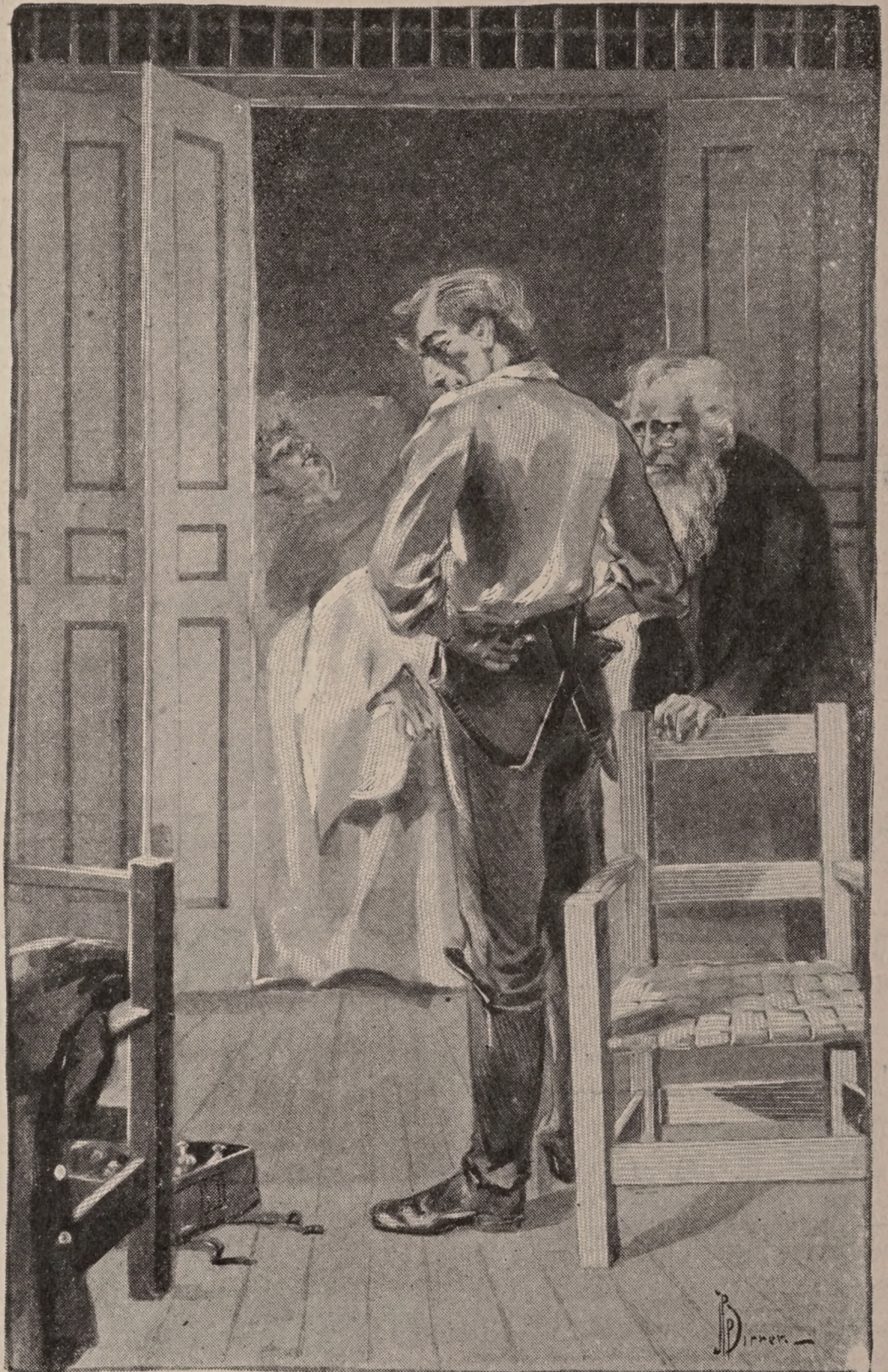
"But Saunders has been fillin' his lungs for five and thirty year wi' strong Drumtochty air, an' eatin' nothin' but coarse oatmeal, an' drinkin' nothin' but fresh milk from the cow, an' followin' the plow through the new-turned, sweet-smellin' earth, an' swingin' the scythe in haytime an' harvest till the legs an' arms o' him were iron, an' his chest was like the cuttin' o' an oak tree.

"He's a woesome sight the night, but Saunders was a sturdy man once, and will never let his life be taken lightly from him. No, no, he hasn't sinned against Nature, an' Nature 'ill stand by him noo in his hour o' distress.

"I daren't say yea, Bell, much as I would like, for this is an evil disease, cunnin' an'

treacherous, but I'll not say nay, so keep your heart from despair.

"It will be a sore fight, but it 'ill be settled one way or anither by six o'clock the morn's



"I saw noo there was to be a stand-up fight."—See page 80.

morn. No man can prophesy hoo it 'ill end, but one thing is certain — I'll no see death take a Drumtochty man afore his time if I can help it.

"Noo, Bell, my woman, ye're near dead wi' tire, an' no wonder. Ye've done all ye could for your man, an' ye 'ill trust him the night to Drumsheugh an' me; we 'ill no fail him or you.

"Lie doon an' rest, an' if it be the will o' the Almighty, I'll waken ye in the mornin' to see a livin, conscious man, an' if it be itherwise I'll come for ye the sooner, Bell," and the big red hand went out to the anxious wife. "I give you my word."

Bell leaned over the bed, and at the sight of Saunders' face a superstitious dread seized her.

"See, doctor, the shadow of death is on him that never lifts. I've seen it afore, on my father an' mither. I cannot leave him, I cannot leave him!"

"It's hoverin', Bell, but it hasn't fallen; please God it never will. Go oot an' get some sleep, for it's time we were at oor work.

"The doctors in the towns have nurses an' all kinds o' handy apparatus," said MacLure to Drumsheugh, when Bell had gone, "but you an' me 'ill need to be nurse the night, an' use such things as we have.

"It'll be a long night an' anxious work, but I would rather have ye, old friend, wi' me than ony man in the Glen. Ye're no feared to give a hand?"

"Me feared? No likely. Man, Saunders came to me but a laddie, and has been on Drumsheugh for eight an' twenty years, an' though he be a stubborn fellow, he's as faithful a servant as ever lived. It's woe-some to see him lyin' there moanin' like some dumb animal from mornin' to night, an' no able to answer his own wife when she speaks.

"Do ye think, Weelum, he has a chance?"

"That he has, at ony rate, and it'll no be your blame or mine if he hasn't more."

While he was speaking, MacLure took off his coat and waistcoat and hung them on the back of the door. Then he rolled up the

sleeves of his shirt and laid bare two arms that were nothing but bone and muscle.

"It made my very blood run faster to the end o' my fingers just to look at him," Drumsheugh expatiated afterwards to Hillocks, "for I saw noo that there was to be a stand-up fight atween him an' death for Saunders, an' when I thought o' Bell an' her bairns, I knew who would win."

"Off wi' your coat, Drumsheugh," said MacLure; "ye 'ill need to bend your back the night; gather all the pails in the house an' fill them at the spring, an' I'll come doon to help ye wi' the carryin'."

It was a wonderful ascent up the steep pathway from the spring to the cottage on its little knoll, the two men in single file, bareheaded, silent, solemn, each with a pail of water in either hand, MacLure limping painfully in front, Drumsheugh blowing behind; and when they laid down their burden in the sick room, where the bits of furniture had been put to one side and a large tub held the center, Drumsheugh looked curiously at the doctor.

"No, I'm no daft; ye needn't be feared; but ye're to get your first lesson in medicine the night, an' if we win the battle ye can set up for yourself in the Glen.

"There's two dangers—that Saunders' strength fails, an' that the force o' the fever grows; and we have just two weapons. Yon milk on the drawers' head is to keep up the strength, and this cool fresh water is to keep doon the fever. We 'ill cast oot the fever by the virtue o' the earth an' the water."

"Do ye mean to put Saunders in the tub?"

"Ye have it noo, Drumsheugh, an' that's hoo I need your help."

"Man, Hillocks," Drumsheugh used to moralize, as often as he remembered that critical night, "it was humblin' to see hoo low sickness can bring a powerfu' man, an' ought to keep us from pride.

"A month afore there wasn't a stronger man in the Glen than Saunders, an' noo he was just a bundle o' skin an' bone, that

neither saw, nor heard, nor moved, nor felt, that knew nothin' that was done to him.

"Hillocks, I wouldn't have wished ony man to have seen Saunders—for it will never pass from before my eyes as long as I live—but I wish all the Glen had stood by MacLure kneelin' on the floor wi' his sleeves up to his arm-pits and waitin' on Saunders.

"Yon big man was as pitifu' an' gentle as a woman, and when he laid the poor fellow in his bed again, he wrapped him over as a mither does her bairn."

Thrice it was done, Drumsheugh ever bringing up colder water from the spring, and twice MacLure was silent; but after the third time there was a gleam in his eye.

"We're holdin' oor own; we're no bein' mastered at ony rate; more I cannot say for three hours.

"We 'ill no need the water again, Drumsheugh; go oot an' take a breath o' air; I'm on guard myself."

It was the hour before daybreak, and Drumsheugh wandered through fields he had trodden since childhood. The cattle lay sleeping in the pastures; their shadowy forms, with a patch of whiteness here and there, having a weird suggestion of death. He heard the burn running over the stones; fifty years ago he had made a dam that lasted till winter. The hooting of an owl made him start; one had frightened him as a boy so that he ran home to his mother—she died thirty years ago. The smell of ripe corn filled the air; it would soon be cut and garnered. He could see the dim outlines of his house, all dark and cold; no one he loved was beneath the roof. The lighted window in Saunders' cottage told where a man hung between life and death, but love was in that home. The futility of life arose before this lonely man, and overcame his heart with an indescribable sadness. What a vanity was all human labor, what a mystery all human life!

But while he stood a subtle change came over the night, and the air trembled round

him as if one had whispered. Drumsheugh lifted his head and looked eastwards. A faint gray stole over the distant horizon, and suddenly a cloud reddened before his eyes. The sun was not in sight, but was rising and sending forerunners before his face. The cattle began to stir, a blackbird burst into song, and before Drumsheugh crossed the threshold of Saunders' house, the first ray of the sun had broken on a peak of the Grampians.

MacLure left the bedside, and as the light of the candle fell on the doctor's face, Drumsheugh could see that it was going well with Saunders.

"He's no worse, an' it's half six noo; it's too soon to say more, but I'm hopin' for the best. Sit doon an' take a sleep, for ye're needin' 't, Drumsheugh, an' man, ye have worked for it."

As he dozed off, the last thing Drumsheugh saw was the doctor sitting erect in his chair, a clinched fist resting on the bed, and his eyes already bright with the vision of victory.

He awoke with a start, to find the room flooded with the morning sunshine, and every trace of last night's work removed.

The doctor was bending over the bed and speaking to Saunders.

"It's me, Saunders—Doctor MacLure, ye know; don't try to speak or move; just let this drop o' milk slip doon—ye 'ill be needin' your breakfast, lad—an' go to sleep again."

Five minutes and Saunders had fallen into a deep, healthy sleep, all tossing and moaning come to an end. Then MacLure stepped softly across the floor, picked up his coat and waistcoat, and went out at the door.

Drumsheugh arose and followed him without a word. They passed through the little garden, sparkling with dew, and beside the cow-house, where Hawkie rattled her chain, impatient for Bell's coming, and by Saunders' little strip of corn ready for the scythe, till they reached an open field. There

they came to a halt, and Doctor MacLure for once allowed himself to go.

His coat he flung east and his waistcoat west, as far as he could hurl them, and it was plain he would have shouted had he been a complete mile from Saunders' room. He struck Drumsheugh a mighty blow that well-nigh levelled that substantial man in the dust, and then the doctor of Drumtochty issued his bulletin.

"Saunders wasn't to live through the night, but he's livin' this minute, an' like to live.

"He's got by the worst clean an' fair, an' wi' him that's as good as cure.

"It 'ill be a grand wakenin' for Bell; she 'ill no be a widow yet, nor the bairnies fatherless.

"There's no use glowerin' at me, Drumsheugh, for a body's daft at a time, an' I can't contain myself, an' I'm no goin' to try."

Then it dawned upon Drumsheugh that the doctor was attempting the Highland fling.

"He's ill made to begin wi'," Drumsheugh explained in the kirk-yard next Sabbath, "an' ye know he's been terrible mishandled by accidents, so ye may think what like it was; but, as sure as death, o' all the Hieland flings I ever saw, yon was the bonniest.

"I haven't shaken my legs for thirty years, but I confess to a turn myself. Ye may laugh if ye like, neighbors, but the thought o' Bell an' the news that was waitin' her got the better o' me."

Drumtochty did not laugh. Drumtochty looked as if it could have done quite otherwise for joy.

"I would have made a third, if I had been there," announced Hillocks aggressively.

"Come on, Drumsheugh," said Jamie Soutar, "give's the end o't; it was a mighty mornin'."

"We're two old fools," says MacLure to me, and he gathers up his clothes. 'It would set us better to be tellin' Bell.'

"She was sleepin' on the top o' her bed, wrapped in a plaid, fair worn oot wi' three weeks nursin' o' Saunders, but at the first touch she was oot upon the floor.

"'Is Saunders dyin', doctor?' she cries. 'Ye promised to waken me; don't tell me it's all over!'

"'There's no dyin' about him, Bell; ye're no to lose your man this time, so far as I can see. Come in an' judge for yourself.'

"Bell looked at Saunders, and the tears of joy fell on the bed like rain.

"'The shadow's lifted!' she said; 'he's come back from the mouth o' the tomb. I prayed last night that the Lord would leave Saunders till the laddies could do for themselves, an' these words came into my mind, 'Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the mornin'.' The Lord heard my prayer, and joy has come in the mornin', an' she gripped the doctor's hand. 'Ye've been the instrument, Doctor MacLure. Ye wouldn't give him up, and ye did what no ither could for him, an' I've my man the day an' the bairns have their father.'

"An' afore MacLure knew what she was doin', Bell lifted his hand to her lips an' kissed it."

"Did she, though?" cried Jamie. "Who would have thought there was as much spunk in Bell?"

"MacLure, of course, was clean scandalized," continued Drumsheugh, "an' pulled away his hand as if it had been burned.

"No man can bear that kind o' pamperin', an' I never heard o' such a thing in the parish, but we must excuse Bell, neighbors; it was an occasion by ordinar," and Drumsheugh made Bell's apology to Drumtochty for such an excess of feeling.

"I see nothin' to excuse," insisted Jamie, who was in great humor that Sabbath. "The doctor has never been burdened wi' fees, an' I'm judgin' he counted a woman's gratitude that he saved from widowhood the best he ever got."

"I went up to the manse last night," con-

cluded Drumsheugh, "an' told the minister hoo the doctor fought eight hours for Saunders' life an' won, an' ye never saw a man so carried. He walked up and down the room all the time, an' every other minute he blew his nose like a trumpet.

"'I've a cold in my head to-night, Drumsheugh,' says he; 'never mind me.'"

"I've had the same myself in such circumstances; they come on sudden," said Jamie.

"I wager there 'ill be a new bit in the last prayer the day, an' somethin' worth hearin'."

And the fathers went into kirk in great expectation.

"We beseech Thee for such as be sick, that thy hand may be on them for good, and that thou wouldst restore them again to health and strength," was the familiar petition of every Sabbath.

The congregation waited in silence that might be heard, and were not disappointed that morning, for the minister continued:

"Especially do we render Thee hearty thanks that thou didst spare thy servant who was brought down into the dust of death, and hast given him back to his wife and children, and unto that end didst wonderfully bless the skill of him who goes out and in among us, the beloved physician of this parish and adjacent districts."

"Didn't I tell ye, neighbors?" said Jamie, as they stood at the kirk-yard gate before dispersing. "There's no a man in the county could have done it better. 'Beloved physician,' an' his 'skill,' too, an' bringin' in 'adjacent districts'; that's Glen Urtach; it was handsome, and the doctor earned it — ay, every word.

"It's an awfu' pity he didn't hear yon; but dear knows where he is the day, most likely up —"

Jamie stopped suddenly at the sound of a horse's feet, and there, coming down the avenue of beech trees that made a long vista from the kirk gate, they saw the doctor and Jess.

One thought flashed through the minds of the fathers of the commonwealth.

It ought to be done as he passed, and it would be done if it were not the Sabbath. Of course it was out of the question on Sabbath.

The doctor is now distinctly visible, riding after his fashion.

There was never such a chance, if it were only Saturday; and each man reads his own regret in his neighbor's face.

The doctor is nearing them rapidly; they can imagine the shepherd's tartan.

Sabbath or no Sabbath, the Glen cannot let him pass without some tribute of their pride.

Jess has recognized friends, and the doctor is drawing rein.

"It has to be done!" said Jamie, desperately, "say what we like." Then they all looked towards him, and Jamie led.

"Hurrah!" swinging his Sabbath hat in the air, "hurrah!" and once more, "hurrah!" Whinnie Knowe, Drumsheugh and Hillocks joining lustily, but Tammis Mitchell carrying all before him, for he had found at last an expression for his feelings that rendered speech unnecessary.

It was a solitary experience for horse and rider, and Jess bolted without delay. But the sound followed and surrounded them, and as they passed the corner of the kirk-yard, a figure waved his college cap over the wall and gave a cheer on his own account.

"God bless you, doctor, and well done!"

"If it isn't the minister!" cried Drumsheugh, "in his gown an' bands; to think o' that; but I respect him for it."

Then Drumtochty became self-conscious, and went home in confusion of face and unbroken silence, except Jamie Soutar, who faced his neighbors at the parting of the ways without shame.

"I would do it all over again if I had the chance; he got nothin' but his due."

It was two miles before Jess composed her

mind, and the doctor and she could discuss it quietly together.

"I can hardly believe my ears, Jess, an' the Sabbath too; their very judgment has gone from the folk of Drumtochty.

"They've heard about Saunders, I'm thinkin', woman, and they're pleased we brought him round; he's fairly on the mend, ye know, noo.

"I never expected the like o' this, though, and it was just a wee thing more than I could have stood.

"Ye have your share in't too, lass; we've had mony a hard night and day thegither, an' yon was oor reward. No mony men in this warld 'ill ever get a better, for it came from the heart o' honest folk."

THE DOCTOR'S LAST JOURNEY.



RUMTOCHTY had a vivid recollection of the winter when Dr. MacLure was laid up for two months with a broken leg, and the Glen was dependent on the dubious ministrations of the Kildrummie doctor. Mrs. Macfadyen also pretended to recall a "whup" of some kind or other he had in the fifties, but this was considered to be rather a pyrotechnic display of Elspeth's superior memory than a serious statement of fact. MacLure could not have ridden through the snow of forty winters without suffering, yet no one ever heard him complain, and he never pleaded illness to any messenger by night or day.

"It took me," said Jamie Soutar to Milton afterwards, "the greater part o' ten minutes to dig him an' Jess oot one snowy night when Drums turned bad sudden, but if he didn't try to excuse himself for no hearin'

me at once wi' some story aboot just comin' in from Glen Urtach, an' no bein' in his bed for the last two nights.

"He was that careful o' himself an' lazy that if it hadn't been for the silver, I've often thought, Milton, he would never have done a handstroke o' work in the Glen.

"What disgusted me was the way the bairns were taken in wi' him. Man, I've seen him take a wee laddie on his knee that his own mither couldn't quiet, an' lilt 'Sing a song o' sixpence' till the bit mannier would be laughin' like a good one, an' pullin' the doctor's beard.

"As for the women, he fair cast a glamour over them; they're doin' nothin' noo but speak about this body an' the ither he cured, an' hoo he aye had a comfortin' word for sick folk. Women have no discernment, Milton; to hear them speak ye would think MacLure had been a religious man like yourself, although, as ye said, he was little more than a Gallio.

"Bell Baxter was clamorin' away in the shop to such an extent aboot the way MacLure brought round Saunders when he had the fever, that I went oot at the door, I was that disgusted, an' I'm told when Tammas Mitchell heard the news in the smithy he was just on the point o' cryin'.

"The smith said that he was thinkin' o' Annie's trouble, but onyway I call it real bairnly. It's no like Drumtochty; ye're settin' an example, Milton, wi' your composure. But I mind ye took the doctor's measure as soon as ye came into the parish."

It is the penalty of a cynic that he must have some relief for his secret grief, and Milton began to weary of life in Jamie's hands during those days.

Drumtochty was not observant in the matter of health, but they had grown sensitive about Dr. MacLure, and remarked in the kirk-yard all summer that he was failing.

"He was aye spare," said Hillocks, "an' he's been sore twisted for the last twenty year, but I never mind him bowed till the

year. An' he's goin' into small bulk, an' I do not like that, neighbors.

"The Glen wouldn't do weel without Weelum MacLure, an' he's no as young as he was. Man, Drumsheugh, ye might wile him off to the salt water atween the turnip-time and the harvest. He's been workin' forty year for a holiday, an' it's about due."

Drumsheugh was full of tact, and met MacLure quite by accident on the road.

"Saunders 'ill no need me till the shearin' begins," he explained to the doctor, "an' I'm goin' to Brochty for a turn o' the hot baths; they're fine for the rheumatics."

"Will ye no come wi' me for auld lang syne? It's lonesome for a solitary man, an' it would do ye good."

"No, no, Drumsheugh," said MacLure, who understood perfectly. "I've done all these years without a break, an' I'm loath to be takin' holidays at the tail end."

"I'll no be mony months wi' ye a'thegither noo, an' I'm wantin' to spend all the time I have in the Glen. Ye see yourself that I'll soon be gettin' my long rest, an' I'll no deny that I'm wearyin' for it."

As autumn passed into winter, the Glen noticed that the doctor's hair had turned gray, and that his manner had lost all its roughness. A feeling of secret gratitude filled their hearts, and they united in a conspiracy of attention. Annie Mitchell knitted a hugh comforter in red and white, which the doctor wore in misery for one whole day, out of respect for Annie, and then hung in his sitting-room as a wall ornament. Hillocks used to intercept him with hot drinks, and one drifting day compelled him to shelter till the storm abated. Flora Campbell brought a wonderful compound, much tasted in Auchindarroch, for his cough, and the mother of young Burnbrae filled his cupboard with black jam, as a healing measure. Jamie Soutar seemed to have an endless series of jobs in the doctor's direction, and looked in "just to rest himself" in the kitchen.

MacLure had been slowly taking in the situation, and at last he unburdened himself one night to Jamie.

"What ails the folk, think ye? for they're aye lecturin' me noo to take care o' the wet, an' to wrap myself up, an' there's no a week but they're sendin' bit presents to the house, till I'm fair ashamed."

"Oh, I'll explain that in a minute," answered Jamie, "for I know the Glen weel. Ye see they're just tryin' the Scripture plan o' heapin' coals o' fire on your head."

"Here ye've been neglectin' the folk in sickness, an' lettin' them die afore their friends' eyes without a fight, an' refusin' to go to a poor woman in her trouble, an' frightenin' the bairns — no, I'm no done — an' scourgin' us wi' fees, an' livin' yourself on the fat o' the land."

"Ye've been carryin' on this trade ever since your father died, and the Glen didn't notice. But, my word, they've found ye oot at last, an' they're goin' to make ye suffer for all your ill usage. Do ye understand noo?" said Jamie savagely.

For a while MacLure was silent, and then he only said:

"It's little I did for the poor bodies; but ye have a good heart, Jamie, a real good heart."

It was a bitter December Sabbath, and the fathers were settling the affairs of the parish ankle-deep in snow, when MacLure's old housekeeper told Drumsheugh that the doctor was not able to rise, and wished to see him in the afternoon.

"Ay, ay," said Hillocks, shaking his head, and that day Drumsheugh omitted four pews with the ladle, while Jamie was so vicious on the way home that none could endure him.

Janet had lighted a fire in the unused grate, and hung a plaid by the window to break the power of the cruel north wind, but the bare room with its half a dozen bits of furniture and a worn strip of carpet, and the outlook upon the snow drifted up to the

second pane of the window and the black firs laden with their icy burden, sent a chill to Drumsheugh's heart.

The doctor had weakened sadly, and could hardly lift his head, but his face lit up at the sight of his visitor, and the big hand, which was now quite refined in its whiteness, came out from the bed-clothes with the old warm grip.

"Come in, man, and sit doon; it's an awfu' day to bring ye so far, but I knew ye wouldn't grudge the travel.

"I wasn't sure till last night, an' then I felt it would not be long, an' I took a wearyin' this mornin' to see ye.

"We've been friends since we were laddies at the old school in the firs, an' I would like ye to be wi' me at the end. Ye'll stay the night, Paitrick, for auld lang syne?"

Drumsheugh was much shaken, and the sound of his Christian name, which he had not heard since his mother's death, gave him a shiver as if one had spoken from the other world.

"It's most awfu' to hear ye speakin' aboot dyin', Weelum. I cannot bear it. We 'ill have the Muirtown doctor up, an' ye 'ill be aboot again in no time.

"Ye haven't ony sore trouble; ye're just worn oot wi' hard work an' needin' a rest. Do not say ye're goin' to leave us, Weelum; we can't do withoot ye in Drumtochty;" and Drumsheugh looked wistfully for some word of hope.

"No, no, Paitrick; nothin' can be done, an' it's too late to send for ony doctor. There's a knock that cannot be mistaken, an' I heard it last night. I've fought death for ither folk more than forty year, but my own time has come at last.

"I've no trouble worth mentionin' — a bit touch o' bronchitis — an' I've had a grand constitution, but I'm fair worn oot, Paitrick; that's my complaint, an' it's past curin'."

Drumsheugh went over to the fireplace, and for a while did nothing but break up

the smoldering peats, whose smoke powerfully affected his nose and eyes.

"When ye're ready, Paitrick, there's two or three little bits o' business I would like ye to look after, an' I'll tell ye aboot them as long's my head's clear.

"I didn't keep books, as ye know, for I aye had a good memory, so nobody 'ill be hurried for money after my death, and ye 'ill have no accounts to collect.

"But the folk are honest in Drumtochty, an' they 'ill be offerin' ye silver, an' I'll give ye my mind aboot it. If it be a poor body, tell her to keep it, and get a bit plaidie wi' the money, an' she 'ill maybe think o' her old doctor at a time. If it be a well-to-do man, take half of what he offers, for a Drumtochty man would scorn to be mean in such circumstances; an' if onybody needs a doctor an' cannot pay for him, see that he's no left to die when I'm oot o' the road."

"No fear o' that as long as I'm livin', Weelum; that hundred's still to the fore, ye know, an' I'll take care it's weel spent.

"Yon was the best job we ever did thegither, an' duckin' Saunders; ye 'ill no forget that night, Weelum" — a gleam came into the doctor's eyes — "to say nothin' o' the Highlan' fling."

The remembrance of that great victory came upon Drumsheugh and tried his fortitude.

"What 'ill become o' us when ye're no here to give a hand in time o' need? We 'ill take ill wi' a stranger that doesn't know one o' us from anither."

"It's all for the best, Paitrick, an' ye 'ill see that in a while. I've known fine that my day was over, an' that ye should have a younger man.

"I did what I could to keep up wi' the new medicine, but I had little time for readin' an' none for travelin'.

"I'm the last o' the old school, an' I know as weel as onybody that I wasn't so dainty and fine-mannered as the town doctors. Ye

took me as I was, an' nobody ever cast up to me that I was a plain man. No, no; ye've been real kind an' considerate all these years."

"Weelum, if ye carry on such nonsense ony longer," interrupted Drumsheugh, huskily, "I'll leave the house; I can't stand it."

"It's the truth, Paitrick, but we 'ill go on wi' oor work, for I'm failin' fast.

Speak like this to me. Where would Jess go but to Drumsheugh? She 'ill have her run o' rack an' manger so long as she lives; the Glen wouldn't like to see anither man on Jess, an' no man 'ill ever touch the old mare."

"Don't mind me, Paitrick, for I expected this; but ye know we're no very smart wi' oor tongues in Drumtochty, an' do not tell all that's in oor hearts.



"That might have been written for me, Paitrick."—See page 88.

"Give Janet ony sticks o' furniture she needs to furnish a house, an' sell everything else to pay the undertaker an' gravedigger. If the new doctor be a young laddie an' no very rich, ye might let him have the books an' instruments; it 'ill aye be a help.

"But I wouldn't like ye to sell Jess, for she's been a faithfu' servant an' a friend too. There's a note or two in that drawer I saved, an' if ye knew ony man that would give her a bit o' grass and a stall in his stable till she followed her maister —"

"Confound ye, Weelum!" broke out Drumsheugh. "It's doonright cruel o' ye to

"Weel, that's all that I mind, an' the rest I leave to yourself. I've neither kith nor kin to bury me, so you an' the neighbors 'ill need to let me doon; but if Tammas Mitchell or Saunders be standin' near an' lookin' as they would like a cord, give it to them, Paitrick. They're both quiet fellows an' haven't much to say, but Tammas has a grand heart, and there's worse folk in the Glen than Saunders.

"I'm gettin' drowsy, an' I'll no be able to follow ye soon, I doubt; would ye read a bit to me afore I fall over?

"Ye 'ill find my mither's Bible on the

drawers' head, but ye 'ill need to come close to the bed, for I'm no hearin' or seein' so weel as I was when ye came."

Drumsheugh put on his spectacles and searched for a comfortable Scripture, while the light of the lamp fell on his shaking hands and the doctor's face, where the shadow was now settling.

"My mither aye wanted this read to her when she was weak," and Drumsheugh began:

"'In my Father's house are many mansions,'" but MacLure stopped him.

"It's a bonnie word, an' your mither was a saint; but it's no for the like o' me. It's too good; I daren't take it.

"Shut the book an' let it open itself, an' ye 'ill get a bit I've been readin' every night the last month."

Then Drumsheugh found the parable wherein the Master tells us what God thinks of a Pharisee and of a penitent sinner, till he came to the words: "And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner."

"That might have been written for me, Paitrick, or ony ither old sinner that has finished his life an' has nothin' to say for himself.

"It wasn't easy for me to get to kirk, but I could have managed wi' a stretch, an' I used langidge I shouldn't, an' I might have been gentler, an' no have been so short in the temper. I see 't all noo.

"It's too late to mend, but ye 'ill maybe just say to the folk that I was sorry, an' I'm hopin' that the Almighty 'ill have mercy on me.

"Could ye . . . put up a bit prayer, Paitrick?"

"I haven't the words," said Drumsheugh, in great distress; "would ye like to send for the minister?"

"It's no the time for that noo, an' I would rather have yourself — just what's in

your heart, Paitrick; the Almighty 'ill know the rest himself."

So Drumsheugh knelt and prayed with many pauses:

"Almighty God . . . don't be hard on Weelum MacLure, for he's no been hard wi' onybody in Drumtochty. . . . Be kind to him, as he's been to us all for forty year. . . . We're all sinners afore thee. . . . Forgive him what he's done wrong, an' don't cast it up to him. . . . Mind the folk he's helped . . . the women an' bairnies . . . an' give him a welcome home, for he's sore needin' 't after all his work. . . . Amen."

"Thank ye, Paitrick, an' good-night to ye. My own true friend, give 's your hand, for I'll maybe not know ye again.

"Noo, I'll say my mither's prayer an' have a sleep, but ye'll no leave me till all is over."

Then he repeated, as he had done every night of his life:

"This night I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep,
And if I die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take."

He was sleeping quietly when the wind drove the snow against the window with a sudden "swish," and he instantly awoke, so to say, in his sleep. Some one needed him.

"Are ye from Glen Urtach?" and an unheard voice seemed to have answered him.

"Worse, is she, an' sufferin' awfu'; that's no lightsome; ye did right to come.

"The front door's drifted up; go round to the back, an' ye 'ill get into the kitchen; I'll be ready in a minute.

"Give 's a hand wi' the lantern when I'm saddlin' Jess, an' ye needn't come on till daylight; I know the road."

Then he was away in his sleep on some errand of mercy, and struggling through the storm.

"It's a coarse night, Jess, an' heavy trav-elin'; can ye see afore ye, lass? for I'm clean

confused wi' the snow; wait a wee till I find the division o' the roads; it's aboot here, back or forward.

"Steady, lass, steady; don't plunge; it's a drift we're in, but ye're no sinkin'; . . . Up, noo. . . There ye are on the road again.

"Eh, it's deep the night, an' hard on us both, but there's a poor woman might die if we don't struggle through. . . . That's it; ye know fine what I'm sayin'.

"We 'ill have to leave the road here, an' take to the moor. Sandie 'ill no be able to leave the wife alone to meet us. . . . Feel for yourself, lass, an' keep oot o' the holes.

"Yon's the house, black in the snow. Sandie, man, ye frightened us; I don't see ye behind the dyke; hoo's the wife?"

After a while he began again:

"Ye're fair done, Jess, an' so I am myself; we're both gettin' old, an' do not take so weel wi' the night work.

"We 'ill soon be home noo; this is the black wood, an' it's no long after that; we're ready for oor beds, Jess. . . . Aye, ye like a clap at a time; mony a mile we've gone thegither.

"Yon's the light in the kitchen window; no wonder ye're neighin'. . . . It's been a stiff journey; I'm tired, lass. . . . I'm tired to death." And the voice died into silence.

Drumsheugh held his friend's hand, which now and again tightened in his, and, as he watched, a change came over the face on the pillow beside him. The lines of weariness disappeared, as if God's hand had passed over it, and peace began to gather round the closed eyes.

The doctor has forgotten the toil of later years, and has gone back to his boyhood.

"The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want,"

he repeated, till he came to the last verse, and then he hesitated.

"'Goodness and mercy all my life
Shall surely follow me.'

"Follow me . . . and . . . and . . . What's next? Mither said I was to have it ready when she came.

"'I'll come afore ye go to sleep, Willie, but ye 'ill no get your kiss unless ye finish the Psalm.'

"And . . . in God's house . . . for evermore my . . . hoo does it run? I can't mind the next word. . . . My, my —

"It's too dark noo to read it, an' mither 'ill soon be comin'."

Drumsheugh, in an agony, whispered into his ear, "'My dwelling-place,' Weelum."

"That's it, that's it all noo; who said it?

"'And in God's house for evermore
My dwelling-place shall be.'

"I'm ready noo, an' I'll get my kiss when mither comes; I wish she would come, for I'm tired, an' wantin' to sleep.

"Yon's her step . . . an' she's carryin' a light in her hand; I see it through the door.

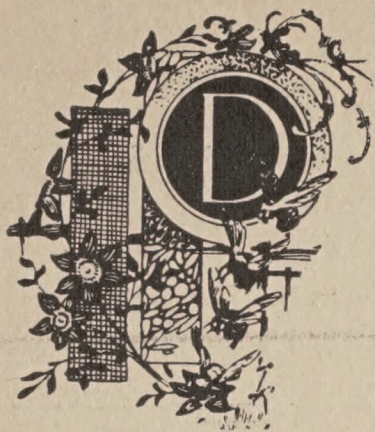
"Mither, I knew ye wouldn't forget your laddie, for ye promised to come, an' I've finished my Psalm.

"'And in God's house for evermore
My dwelling-place shall be.'

"Give me the kiss, mither, for I've been waitin' for ye, an' I'll soon be asleep."

The gray morning light fell on Drumsheugh, still holding his friend's cold hand, and staring at a hearth where the fire had died down into white ashes; but the peace on the doctor's face was of one who rested from his labors.

THE MOURNING OF THE GLEN.



DOCTOR MAC LURE was buried during the great snowstorm, which is still spoken of, and will remain the standard of snow-fall in Drumtochty for the century. The snow was deep on the

Monday, and the men who gave notice of his funeral had hard work to reach the doctor's distant patients. On Tuesday morning it began to fall again in heavy, fleecy flakes, and continued till Thursday, and then on Thursday the north wind rose and swept the snow into the hollows of the roads that went to the upland farms, and built it into a huge bank at the mouth of Glen Urtach, and laid it across our main roads in drifts of every size and the most lovely shapes, and filled up crevices in the hills to the depth of fifty feet.

On Friday morning the wind had sunk to passing gusts that powdered your coat with white, and the sun was shining on one of those winter landscapes no townsman can imagine and no countryman ever forgets. The Glen, from end to end and side to side, was clothed in a glistening mantle white as no fuller on earth could white it, that flung its skirts over the clumps of trees and scattered farmhouses, and was only divided where the Tochty ran with black, swollen stream. The great moor rose and fell in swelling billows of snow that arched themselves over the burns, running deep in the mossy ground, and hid the black, peat-bogs with a thin, dangerous crust. Beyond, the hills northwards and westwards stood high in white majesty, save where the black crags of Glen Urtach broke the line, and, above our lower Grampians, we caught glimpses of the distant peaks that lifted their heads in holiness unto God.

It seemed to me a fitting day for William

MacLure's funeral, rather than summertime, with its flowers and golden corn. He had not been a soft man, nor had he lived an easy life, and now he was to be laid to rest amid the austere majesty of winter, yet in the shining of the sun. Jamie Soutar, with whom I toiled across the Glen, did not think with me, and was gravely concerned.

"Nae doubt it's a grand sight; the like o't is no given us twice in a generation, an' nae king was ever carried to his tomb in such a cathedral. But it's the folk I'm considerin', how they 'ill bear it; it's hard enough for them that's on the road, an' it's clean impossible for the rest.

"They 'ill do their best, every man o' them, ye may depend on that; an' had it been open weather there wouldn't have been six able-bodied men missin'.

"I was mad at them, because they never said onything when he was livin', but they felt, for all that, what he had done, an', I think, he knew it afore he died.

"He had just one fault, to my thinkin', for I never judged the worse o' him for his touch o' roughness—good trees have gnarled bark—but he thought too little o' himsel'.

"Noo, if I had asked him how mony folk would come to his beerial, he would have said, 'They 'ill be Drumsheugh an' yersel', an' maybe two or three neighbors besides the minister,' an' the fact is that no man in oor time would have such a gatherin' if it werena for the storm.

"Ye see," said Jamie, who had been counting heads all morning, "there's six shepherds in Glen Urtach—they're shut up fast; an' there might have been a good half dozen from Dunleith way, an' I'm told there's no road; and there's the high Glen, no man could cross the moor the day, an' it's eight mile round;" and Jamie proceeded to review the Glen in every detail of age, driftiness of road and strength of body, till we arrived at the doctor's cottage, when he

had settled on a reduction of fifty through stress of weather.

Drumsheugh was acknowledged as chief mourner by the Glen, and received us at the gate with a labored attempt at everyday manners.

"Ye've had heavy travelin', I doot, an' ye 'ill be cold. It's hard weather for the sheep, an' I'm thinkin' this 'ill be a feedin' storm.

"There was no use tryin' to dig oot the front door last night, for it would have been drifted up again before mornin'. We've cleared away the snow at the back for prayer; ye 'ill get in at the kitchen door.

"There's a number of Dunleith men —"

"Who!" cried Jamie in an instant.

"Dunleith men," said Drumsheugh.

"Do ye mean they're here? Where are they?"

"Dryin' themsel's at the fire, an' no withoot need; one o' them went over the head in a drift, an' his neighbors had to pull him oot.

"It took them a good four hours to get across, an' it was hard work; they liked him weel down that way. An' Jamie man," — here Drumsheugh's voice changed its note, and his public manner disappeared — "what do ye think o' this? Every man o' them has on his blacks."

"It's more than could be expected," said Jamie; "but where do yon men come from, Drumsheugh?"

Two men in plaids were descending the hill behind the doctor's cottage, taking three feet at a stride, and carrying long staffs in their hands.

"They're Glen Urtach men, Jamie, for one o' them was at Kildrummie fair wi' sheep; but hoo they've managed to get doon passes me."

"It can't be, Drumsheugh!" said Jamie, greatly excited. "Glen Urtach's barred up wi' snow like a locked door.

"Ye're no surely from the Glen, lads?" as the men leaped the dyke and crossed to the

back door, the snow falling from their plaids as they walked.

"We're that, an' no mistake, but I thought we would be beaten one place, eh, Charlie? I'm no so weel acquaint wi' the hill on this side, an' there were some dangerous drifts."

"It was grand o' ye to make the attempt," said Drumsheugh, "an' I'm glad ye're safe."

"He came through as bad himsel' to help my wife," was Charlie's reply.

"They're three more Urtach shepherds 'ill come in soon; they're from Upper Urtach, an' we saw them fordin' the river; my certes, it took them all their time, for it was up to their waists an' rinnin' like a mill-race, but they joined hands an' came over fine." And the Urtach men went in to the fire.

The Glen began to arrive in twos and threes, and Jamie, from a point of vantage at the gate, and under an appearance of utter indifference, checked his roll till even he was satisfied.

"Weelum MacLure 'ill have the beerial he deserves in spite o' snow an' drifts; it passes all to see hoo they've gathered from far an' near.

"I'm thinkin' ye can collect them for the minister noo, Drumsheugh. Everybody's here except the high Glen, an' we mustn't look for them."

"Don't be so sure o' that, Jamie. Yon's terrible like them on the road, wi' Whinnie at their head;" and so it was, twelve in all, only old Adam Ross absent, detained by force, being eighty-two years of age.

"It would have been temptin' Providence to cross the moor," Whinnie explained, "an' it's a long step round. I doot we're the last."

"See, Jamie," said Drumsheugh, as he went to the house, "if there be onybody in sight afore we begin; we must make allowances the day, wi' two feet o' snow on the ground, to say nothin' o' drifts."

"There's somethin' at the turnin', an' it's no folk; it's a machine o' some kind or ither — maybe a bread cart that's fought its way up."

"No, it's no that; there's two horses, one afore the ither. If it's no a dog-cart wi' two men in the front! they 'ill be comin' to the beerial."

"What would ye say, Jamie," Hillocks suggested, "but it might be some o' the Muirtown doctors? They were awfu' intimate wi' MacLure."

"It's no Muirtown doctors," cried Jamie, in great exultation, "nor ony ither doctors. I know those horses, and who's behind them. Quick, man, Hillocks, stop the folk, an' tell Drumsheugh to come oot, for Lord Kilspindie has come up from Muirtown Castle."

Jamie himself slipped behind, and did not wish to be seen.

"It's the respect he's gettin' the day, from high an' low," was Jamie's husky apology; "to think o' them fightin' their way down from Glen Urtach, an' toilin' roond from the high Glen, an' his lordship drivin' through the drifts all the road from Muirtown, just to honor Weelum's MacLure's beerial."

"It's no ceremony the day, ye may trust to it; it's the heart brought the folk, an' ye can see it in their faces; every man has his own reason, an' he's thinkin' on't, though he's speakin' o' nothin' but the storm. He's mindin' the day Weelum pulled him oot from the jaws o' death, or the night he saved the good wife in her hour o' trouble."

"That's why they put on their blacks this mornin' afore it was light, an' wrestled through the snow-drifts at risk o' life. Drumtochty folk can't say much, it's an awfu' pity, an' they 'ill do their best to show nothin', but I can read it all in their eyes."

"But woe's me," — and Jamie broke down utterly behind a fir tree, so tender a thing is a cynic's heart — "that folk 'ill take a man's best work all his days without a

word, an' no do him honor till he dies. Oh, if they had only gathered like this just once when he was livin', and let him see he hadn't labored in vain! His reward has come too late, too late!"

During Jamie's vain regret, the Castle trap, bearing the marks of a wild passage in the snow-covered wheels, a broken shaft tied with rope, a twisted lamp, and the panting horses, pulled up between two rows of farmers, and Drumsheugh received his lordship with evident emotion.

"My lord, . . . we never thought o' this; . . . an' such a road!"

"How are you, Drumsheugh? and how are you all this wintry day? That's how I'm half an hour late; it took us four hours stiff work for sixteen miles, mostly in the drifts, of course."

"It was good o' your lordship to make such an effort, an' the whole Glen will be gratefu' to ye, for ony kindness to him is kindness to us."

"You make too much of it, Drumsheugh," and the clear, firm voice was heard of all; "it would have taken more than a few snow-drifts to keep me from showing my respect to William MacLure's memory."

When all had gathered in a half circle before the kitchen door, Lord Kilspindie came out — every man noticed he had left his overcoat, and was in black, like the Glen — and took a place in the middle, with Drumsheugh and Burnbrae, his two chief tenants, on the right and left, and, as the minister appeared, every man bared his head.

The doctor looked on the company — a hundred men such as for strength and gravity you could hardly have matched in Scotland — standing out in picturesque relief against the white background, and he said:

"It's a bitter day, friends, and some of you are old; perhaps it might be wise to cover your heads before I begin to pray."

Lord Kilspindie, standing erect and gray-headed between the two old men, replied:

"We thank you, Dr. Davidson, for your thoughtfulness; but he endured many a storm in our service, and we are not afraid of a few minutes' cold at his funeral."

A look flashed round the stern faces, and was reflected from the minister, who seemed to stand higher.

His prayer, we noticed with critical appreciation, was composed for the occasion, and

vant departed." Again the same sigh, and the minister said amen.

The undertaker stood in the doorway without speaking, and four stalwart men came forward. They were the volunteers that would lift the coffin and carry it for the first stage. One was Tammass, Annie Mitchell's man; and another was Saunders Baxter, for whose life MacLure had his great fight with



All gathered in a half circle before the kitchen door.—See page 92.

the first part was a thanksgiving to God for the life-work of our doctor, wherein each clause was a reference to his services and sacrifices. No one moved or said amen—it had been strange with us—but when every man had heard the gratitude of his dumb heart offered to heaven, there was a great sigh.

After which the minister prayed that we might have grace to live as this man had done from youth to old age, not for himself, but for others, and that we might be followed to our grave by somewhat of "that love wherewith we mourn this day thy ser-

death; and the third was the Glen Urtach shepherd for whose wife's sake MacLure suffered a broken leg and three fractured ribs in a drift; and the fourth, a Dunleith man, had his own reasons of remembrance.

"He's far lighter than ye would expect for so big a man—there wasn't much left o' him, ye see—but the road is heavy, and I'll change ye after the first half mile."

"Ye needn't trouble yoursel'," said the man from Glen Urtach; "there 'ill be no change in the carryin' the day;" and Tammass was thankful someone had saved him speaking.

Surely no funeral is like unto that of a doctor for pathos, and a peculiar sadness fell on that company as his body was carried out, who, for nearly half a century, had been their help in sickness, and had beaten back Death time after time from their door. Death after all was victor, for the man that saved them had not been able to save himself.

As the coffin passed the stable door a horse neighed within, and every man looked at his neighbor. It was his old mare crying to her master.

Jamie slipped into the stable, and went up into the stall.

"Poor lass! ye're no goin' wi' him the day, an' ye 'ill never see him again; ye've had your last ride thegither, an' ye were true to the end."

After the funeral Drumsheugh came himself for Jess, and took her to his farm. Saunders made a bed for her with soft dry straw, and prepared for her supper such things as horses love. Jess would neither take food nor rest, but moved uneasily in her stall, and seemed to be waiting for someone that never came. No man knows what a horse or a dog understands and feels, for God hath not given them our speech. If any footstep was heard in the courtyard, she began to neigh, and was always looking around as the door opened. But nothing would tempt her to eat, and in the night-time Drumsheugh heard her crying as if she expected to be taken out for some sudden journey. The Kildrummie veterinary came to see her, and said that nothing could be done when it happened after this fashion with an old horse.

"I've seen it once afore," he said. "If she were a Christian instead o' a horse, ye might say she was dyin' o' a broken heart."

He recommended that she should be shot to end her misery, but no man could be found in the Glen to do the deed, and Jess relieved them of the trouble. When Drums-

heugh went to the stable on Monday morning, a week after Dr. MacLure fell asleep, Jess was resting at last, but her eyes were open, and her face turned to the door.

"She was all the wife he had," said Jamie, as he rejoined the procession, "an' they loved one anither weel."

The black thread wound itself along the whiteness of the Glen, the coffin first, with his lordship and Drumsheugh behind, and the others as they pleased, but in closer ranks than usual, because the snow on either side was deep, and because this was not as other funerals. They could see the women standing at the door of every house on the hillside, and weeping, for each family had some good reason in forty years to remember MacLure. When Bell Baxter saw Saunders alive, and the coffin of the doctor that saved him on her man's shoulder, she bowed her head on the dyke, and the bairns in the village made such a wail for him they loved that the men nearly disgraced themselves.

"I'm glad we're through that, at ony rate," said Hillocks; "he was awfu' taken up wi' the bairns, considerin' he had none o' his own."

There was only one drift on the road between his cottage and kirkyard, and it had been cut early that morning.

Before daybreak Saunders had roused the lads in the servants' quarters, and they had set to work by the light of lanterns with such good will that, when Drumsheugh came down to engineer a circuit for the funeral, there was a fair passage, with walls of snow twelve feet high on either side.

"Man, Saunders," he said, "this was a kind thought, and real well done."

But Saunders' only reply was this:

"Mony a time he's had to go roond; he might as weel have an open road for his last travel."

When the coffin was laid down at the mouth of the grave, the only blackness in the white kirkyard, Tammas Mitchell did

the most beautiful thing in all his life. He knelt down and carefully wiped off the snow the wind had blown upon the coffin, and which had covered the name, and when he had done this he disappeared behind the others, so that Drumsheugh could hardly find him to take a cord. For these were the eight that buried Dr. MacLure — Lord Kilspindie at the head as landlord and Drumsheugh at the feet as his friend; the two ministers of the parish came first on the right and left; then Burnbrae and Hillocks of the farmers, and Saunders and Tammis for the plowmen. So the Glen he loved laid him to rest.

When the sexton had finished his work and the turf had been spread, Lord Kilspindie spoke:

“Friends of Drumtochty, it would not be right that we should part in silence and no man say what is in every heart. We have buried the remains of one that served this Glen with a devotion that has known no reserve, and a kindliness that never failed, for more than forty years. I have seen many brave men in my day, but no man in the trenches of Sebastopol carried himself more knightly than William MacLure. You will never have heard from his lips what I may tell you to-day, that my father secured for him a valuable post in his younger days, and he preferred to work among his own people; and I wished to do many things for him when he was old, but he would have nothing for himself. He will never be forgotten while one of us lives, and I pray that all doctors everywhere may share his spirit. If it be your pleasure I shall erect a cross

above his grave and shall ask my old friend and companion, Dr. Davidson, your minister, to choose the text to be inscribed.”

“We thank you, Lord Kilspindie,” said the doctor, “for your presence with us in our sorrow and your tribute to the memory of William MacLure, and I choose this for his text:

“‘Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.’”

Milton was, at that time, held in the bonds of a very bitter theology, and his indignation was stirred by this unqualified eulogium.

“No doubt Dr. MacLure had many natural virtues, an’ he did his work weel, but it was a pity he didn’t make more profession o’ religion.”

“When William MacLure appears before the Judge, Milton,” said Lachlan Campbell, who that day spoke his last words in public, and they were in defence of charity, “he will not be asking him about his professions, for the doctor’s judgment has been ready long ago; and it iss a good judgment, and you and I will be happy men if we get the like of it.

“It iss written in the Gospel, but it iss William MacLure that will not be expecting it.”

“What is’t, Lachlan?” asked Jamie Soutar eagerly.

The old man, now very feeble, stood in the middle of the road, and his face, once so hard, was softened into a winsome tenderness.

“‘Come, ye blessed of my Father . . . I was sick, and ye visited me.’”

THE END.



"There grows a bonnie brier bush in our kail-yard,
And white are the blossoms on't in our kail-yard."



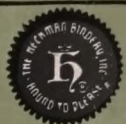
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